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INDIAN FOLK TALES

INDIAN FOLK TALES

BEING SIDE-LIGHTS ON VILLAGE LIFE IN BILASPORE, CENTRAL PROVINCES

BY

E. M. GORDON

47236

The most interesting objects I have seen in India have not been its rivers, nor its mountains, nor its trees, nor its monuments, but its men. They have appeared to me more worthy of study than any other fascinating view on which my eyes have rested.—JOSEPH COOK.

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To

ARCHIBALD McLEAN

PRESIDENT OF THE

FOREIGN CHRISTIAN MISSIONARY SOCIETY.

(CINCINNATI, OHIO, U.S.A.)

AND TO ALL WHO HAVE IN ANY WAY ASSISTED

THE OPERATIONS OF THE ABOVE SOCIETY

AMONGST THE PEOPLE OF WHOM

I WRITE

THIS BOOK IS GRATEFULLY

DEDICATED

PREFACE

THE readers of this book will soon see that I have followed the intensive method of inquiry. My observations have been confined to the western portion of the Bilaspore district of the Central Provinces, India; in other words, to the Mungeli Tehsil. During a residence of sixteen years, after acquiring the dialect of the people, I have gathered, at first hand, the material which is now made public.

It is generally found that most of the primitive peoples are exceedingly reticent as to their beliefs and practices. In order to gain anything like an accurate understanding of their most inward thoughts it is necessary to reside amongst them for a long while, and watch them when they do not know that they are under observation. According to an English proverb, "It is in sports and journeys that a man is known." So in order to understand the real India—the India of the villages—it is necessary not only to live amongst the peasants of that land from year's end to year's end, through hot and cold and rainy weather, through sunshine and shadow, but also to speak with them in their own dialect, and understand the exact signifi-

cance of their most common words both in work and play.

I have had the unique opportunity of fulfilling the above requirements with regard to the villages of Bilaspore. When the people have been gladdened by a plentiful harvest I have listened to the singing of young men and maidens, coming home from the fields in the twilight, bringing in the sheaves. "When the skies have been as brass and the earth has been as iron," when gaunt Famine has stalked through the land I have listened to the incessant cry for bread from men, women, and little children. I have stood by the open grave, and have watched the funeral pile at a cremation. I have been an honoured guest at the marriages and I have had the bride's mother press the yellow rice to my forehead, to signify that they regarded me as one of their own family. I have eaten with them, slept in their homes, travelled with them, and played with them. I have seen them laughing and crying, fighting and making peace. When cholera and plague have smitten their hearts with fear they have called me to the bedside of a loved one, and they have placed the cold, almost lifeless hand in mine, that I might feel for the pulse while they anxiously awaited my opinion as to the outcome. Then there has burst from them those heart-rending cries, which are the same the wide world over. I have sat with the people by the bonfire in the jungle, and with our long shadows thrown on the dense forest around, I have listened to their stories of *rājā* who weighed themselves against gold and precious stones, and who shot arrows which pierced the head of three elephants and lodged in the eye of a fourth. They have aroused me at night to listen to the growl of the prowling tiger, which they believed to be the incar-

nation of a fierce, bloody *Rājput*, who had troubled the neighbouring villages during his lifetime. As I have moved amongst the people in the plains and in the jungle, in the rice-fields and in forest land, I have not forgotten that I was a teacher, while I have endeavoured to be a ready learner, and by learning I have become more efficient in teaching. My interest in the people has increased a hundredfold as I have come to know them better, and my love for them has increased proportionately. It is because I have learned to know them and to love them, that I now desire to write about them, for I am confident that more information will lead to more interest on their behalf.

This book is sent forth with a threefold object: First, that it may add in some small measure to the data which the students of mankind are always glad to receive in order to pursue their own special investigations; secondly, to help officers of the Government and others, who come for the first time to the district, to a better understanding of the people and their ways; thirdly, to enable those who greatly desire the spread of the religion of Christ in India to acquire a more intelligent idea of the beliefs of the people in the villages. Some of the information which is now made public has already appeared in three papers, which were read before the Asiatic Society of Bengal. From time to time I have had applications for copies of my "Notes Concerning the People of Mungeli Tehsil," and have had to refer my friends to the *Journals* of the aforenamed Society. With the publication of this book, however, the necessary information will be available not only in more convenient form, but also greatly increased and more systematically arranged, than was possible in three separate articles written

at an interval of several months. I desire to express my grateful acknowledgment to Rev. J. H. Buckingham, M.A., of Eastbourne, for many valuable hints and much kind aid.

E. M. G.

EASTBOURNE, SUSSEX, ENGLAND,
January, 1908.

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CHAPTER I

The Country and the People

"By that you love the dearest in this world,
As you wish Christian peace to souls departed
Stand these poor people's friend."—SHAKESPEARE.

THE Bilaspore district, one of the many of the Central Provinces of India, is situated between 21° 37′ and 23° 7′ North latitude and 81° 12′ and 83° 40′ East longitude. The area of the district is 7,602 square miles. In other words, it is sufficiently large in area to allow the twelve counties of Wales to be placed within its borders. The population of the district has decreased during the last decade on account of famine and emigration; it now stands at 917,240. As compared with Wales the population is a little more than half that of the Principality.

The people of Bilaspore reside in hundreds of villages and hamlets scattered throughout the district. There are no less than 3,258 of these small villages. The average number of persons in each village is about 280, and there are not half a dozen towns with a popu-

lation of 5,000. The density is 121·4 to the square mile. The people are largely agricultural, their principal crops being paddy, wheat, a small grain known as *kodo*, and several varieties of pulse. The men are somewhat below the average in stature, and the women have a reputation for being more pleasing in appearance than those in other parts of India.

Chhattisgarh.

In former years Bilaspore, together with the adjoining districts of Raipore and Sambalpore, was included in the division known as "the thirty-six forts," that is, *Chhattisgarh*. Even at the present time while touring in the districts one occasionally sees a ruined fort, which brings to mind the days when *rājās* continually fought with each other to gain supremacy. Happily those tumultuous days have gone, let us hope, never to return. But the name "thirty-six forts," or *Chhattisgarh*, is still in use; and one who has long resided in this country is even now called a *Chhattisgarhiyā*. There is a well-known saying, which every one who has been in *Chhattisgarh*, has often heard, and which is in frequent use amongst the natives. It runs as follows:—

> "*Āge panhi, piche bāt,*
> *Tab to chale Chhattisgarh hāth*":

being freely translated, this means: "First beat with a shoe, then give the order; thus alone can you get work from a man of *Chhattisgarh*."

Chamārs, Satnāmi, and Chungiyā.

A considerable portion of the population of the district is made up of a caste known as *Chamārs*.

Now the *Chamār* in most parts of India is a leather-worker, that is, one who removes carcasses of cattle, tans hides, and makes shoes, and other leather articles. But in Bilaspore it is different, for in this district there are thousands of *Chamārs* who would consider themselves defiled if they removed a carcass, and who for generations past have not traded in articles made of leather. The *Chamārs* have two main divisions, the smoking and the non-smoking sections. About a hundred years ago there appeared a reformer in the *Chamār* community of *Chhattisgarh* named Ghāssi Dās. This man was moved by the contempt with which the *Hindus* of higher caste regarded his fellow-castemen. He therefore determined to lift his people to a higher social status. There are many stories how he set about this herculean task. The following account, which I believe to be authentic, was supplied by a *Satnāmi Chamār* over eighty years of age, and he claimed to have seen and heard Ghāssi Dās when he was a boy. He said that the *guru*, or teacher—of whom he always spoke with the greatest reverence—first gathered round him a certain number of disciples. He told these men that he was about to receive a revelation from God, and that he would have to hide himself in the jungles for a period of six months. During this time of retirement his disciples were to go in and out amongst the *Chamār* villages, and inform the people that on a certain date Ghāssi Dās, who had received a call from God, would come down from a hill in the jungle, and that the people should all be there to meet him and to hear the message he would deliver. It has been surmised that during his time of retirement Ghāssi Dās went to the great *Hindu* shrine at Jagganath. If this be so it is more than likely that during his stay at Jagganāth he

heard the preaching of the early missionaries. This he had only partly comprehended, when he came back to his country at the time appointed. At the end of the six months his disciples had announced his return throughout the country, and in consequence tens of thousands of *Chamārs* assembled at a village called Girode in the eastern portion of the Bilaspore district. It was here that Ghāssi Dās made known the tenets of the *Satnāmi* reformation. First and foremost was the injunction to give up the worship of idols and to worship only the

True Name, the Sat Nām,

and to use this name alone as a term of salutation. His followers are therefore to this day known as *Satnāmies.* Ghāssi Dās absolutely forbade the use of meat, tobacco, and intoxicants. He went still further, and prohibited the use of a reddish-coloured lentil (*Ervum lens*), and *lāl bhāji*, a red spinach, because of the resemblance to blood. Together with many other restrictions he forbade the yoking of cattle for ploughing purposes after the midday meal, hence his followers will on no account yoke their cattle when the sun is in the west. Ghāssi Dās is also reported to have said that he would be followed by a "*topiwālla*," or one with a hat, who would instruct his people more fully as to what they should do. As a result of the labours of Ghāssi Dās great numbers of *Chamārs* became *Satnāmies.* Breaking a cocoanut and drinking water in which the headman had dipped his thumb constituted the rite by which the novice was admitted to this sect. A certain number of the *Chamārs*, however, found the restrictions of Ghāssi Dās altogether too exacting. They continued the use of meat, and

they would not give up tobacco and intoxicants. This section of the *Chamār* community is now known as the "Pipe-using," that is to say, the *Chungiyā Chamārs*. With the lapse of years, however, the *Satnāmies*, or the *Chamār* Puritans, have gradually drifted away from the position taken up by their reformer Ghāssi Dās. They are now often seen bowing down to idols.

A certain missionary, with more zeal, perhaps, than common sense, once tried to turn a *Satnāmi* village from idol worship. Finding an image set up in their midst, he exhorted them to abide by the teachings of Ghāssi Dās. He went further ; taking up the stone image he threw it into a dustbin, telling the people that "This was what their teacher, Ghāssi Dās, would do if he should suddenly come into their midst." The people meekly assented to this, but "those convinced against their will, are of the same opinion still." And shortly after this occurrence, when that missionary was taken ill, and was obliged to leave the country, the people were all the more convinced of the influence of the god in the dustbin. It was that god who had smitten the missionary, and so with due reverence he was reinstated, and is worshipped at the present day. The influence of a strong personality like that of Ghāssi Dās having passed away, the people have gradually gone back to their old beliefs and practices ; in other words, they have back-slidden. The dividing line between the *Chungiyās* and the *Satnāmies* is now growing very faint indeed. Some will tell you that it has already disappeared and that all the *Chamārs* are the same.

The Ghassiyās.

The *Ghassiyās* are the grooms of the district, and they profess to be familiar with all that concerns

horses. It is thus that they make their living, and also by cutting and selling grass to those who are the owners of horses. They trade in baskets and winnowing fans, combs and marbles, at a small profit, but they do not make them. *Ghassiyās* are counted amongst the very lowest castes—in fact, next to the sweepers or scavengers; and yet they themselves will have no dealings with the *Kāyasths*, who consider themselves not far removed from the *Brāhmans*. A *Ghassiyā*, however, will not touch a *Kāyasth*, nor will he take from him so much as a pinch of salt. It is said that away in the distant past a *Ghassiyā*, who was engaged as a groom or *syce* to a *Kāyasth Rājā*, was employed by an adversary to assassinate his master. The entire *Kāyasth* community was greatly enraged by this crime, but for a long while they made no retaliation. To use a phrase which is very common in the language of the people, "they concealed their hatred in the stomach." Then, when the assassination was apparently forgotten, the *Kāyasths* invited all the *Ghassiyās* to a feast for the purpose of poisoning man, woman, and child. When the feast was in progress a boy and girl learned by some means that their caste was being destroyed. Making their escape, they hid in the home of a weaver: and it is from those two, who ran away from that fatal feast, that all the *Ghassiyās* of the present day have descended. They have, therefore, resolved never to take even a pinch of salt from the treacherous *Kāyasths*, who all but exterminated their caste.

The Gotra.

Amongst the *Ghassiyās*, as also amongst the *Gonds*, the marriage of cousins is allowed only on the mother's

side. In order to understand the force of this remark the reader's attention is called to the following explanation. It is a well-known fact that the *Hindus* are divided into numerous castes. It is not so generally known, however, that these castes are again divided into sub-castes or endogamus classes. A *Hindu* will not marry outside his sub-caste, which again is divided into numerous *gotras*, or families. A *gotra* is an exogamus class, that is to say, a class outside of which a man must seek his wife. In some respects the *gotra* resembles the surname of the Anglo-Saxon race. On marriage a man will keep his *gotra* name, but a woman joins her husband's *gotra*. The reader is now in a position to understand why the *Ghassiyās* and the *Gonds* allow the marriage of cousins on the mother's side only. It is because such cousins are of different *gotras*. Cousins on the father's side cannot marry because they are of the same *gotra*. Amongst all the castes in Bilaspore district—excepting the *Ghassiyās* and the *Gonds* —the marriage of cousins is held in abhorrence because they are regarded as brothers and sisters. In fact there is no one word for cousin in the language of the people. The words "brother" and "sister" include a cousin also. If a man wishes to be exact, he will say of his cousin: "He is my older father's son," meaning his father's elder brother's son. Or again, he may say, "He is my aunt-mother's son," meaning his mother's sister's son, and so on. He would be shocked at the mere mention of marriage with cousins.

Kurmies.

Some of the best cultivators of the district are to be found amongst the *Kurmies*. Members of this caste do not keep poultry, nor will they live in any place where

these are kept. They will not tease cotton; nor do their women wear the nose ornament, such as is worn by other *Hindu* women. They regard the leather workers with abhorrence; so much so that if a *Kurmi* should have a pair of shoes which does not suit him, he will on no account sell them to another, for by so doing he would be ostracised by his caste-fellows and would bring dishonour to himself. He may dispose of them by deed of gift, but never by sale. The *Kurmies* are distinct from other castes in that they all belong to the same *gotra*, *i.e.*, to the *Kashyap* or Turtle Gotra.

Telies.

The oil-pressers of the district are known as *Telies*, a name which comes from *tel*, meaning oil. They make their livelihood by purchasing oil-seeds from the farmers and extracting the oil by means of a very primitive style of oil-press. For some reason the *Telies* are associated with ill-luck. To meet a man in the early morning who is blind of one eye, is considered unfortunate in most parts of India; but to come across a *Teli* who is blind in one eye, when setting out on a journey would be considered extremely inauspicious. Moreover, a *Teli* is made the butt of many a jocular remark. A police officer was once speaking with his "beaters," prior to a search for tiger in the jungle. Noticing a particularly stout *Teli* amongst the beaters, he made the casual remark: "Be careful, you fat *Teli*, the tiger, I hear, is partial to *Teli's* flesh." It may seem incredible, but it was that same *Teli* who fell a prey to the tiger during the hunt which followed, and next day he died, having been badly mauled. From that time forward not a single *Teli* in the country around would join in a beat for tiger. Often amongst simple village

folk a mere coincidence of the kind mentioned is made the starting-point of a deeply rooted and wide-spread superstition. The *Telies* are peculiar in still another particular. If a maggot should appear in a sore—and this is by no means uncommon—it is customary among *Hindus* to outcast the one who is afflicted in this way. After certain purifying ceremonies, supplemented by a feast for other members of the caste, the one who was afflicted is readmitted to caste privileges. When a *Teli* has maggots in a sore he is required to send for one *Teli* only, but this one must be of the *Sanvāni* sub-caste. Having given a meal to this particular caste-fellow, he is then received into his caste. This repulsive condition of a sore is euphonically spoken of "as a flower having formed or appeared." That is, in the vernacular, they would say "*Phūl par gayā.*"

When I first heard it stated by the people that the *Telies* are specially subject to leprosy, I associated this rumour with the prejudice to this particular caste. In later years while superintending a Leper Asylum I was astonished to find that one-third of the inmates of the Asylum belonged to the oil-men, that is, the *Teli* caste. It was, therefore, with keen interest that I turned to the Report of the Census of 1901 when that was made public. There it may be seen from the exact figures that there is a larger proportion of lepers amongst the *Teli* caste than any other in the district. The bare fact is here mentioned for what it is worth. To theorise is often fascinating, but it is out of the province of the gleaner of folk-lore. Answers as to the why and the wherefore must be left to the expert.

CHAPTER II

Objects of Worship and Festivals

"*Even those we love that are misled.*"—SHAKESPEARE.

Sun-worship.

THE close observer, going in and out amongst the people, will soon notice many survivals of Sun-worship. To give a case in point, there is that very common phrase *Suryā Nārāyan*, which, being freely translated, means "the Divine Sun" or "His Majesty the Sun." Passing a certain *Satnāmi* village early one morning, I noticed an old woman seated at the doorway of her hut facing east. As the sun appeared above the horizon I observed her bowing her head to the ground three times, and repeating the words of salutation enjoined by Ghāssi Dās—"*Satnām, Satnām, Satnām*"; "True name" she said three times, and this alone was her morning worship.

Then, again, there are one or two sacrifices, which are invariably offered on the eastern side of the village. When I once visited a certain village settled by Gonds I was about to sit down on a stone which was fixed upright in the ground. It looked for all the world like one of the many boundary stones which separate the villages, and thinking it would make a convenient seat, I was about to

settle down when one of the men stopped me. "Don't sit on that, *Sāhib*," he said; "that is where we offer incense once every year." The people gave me the name of the god who was worshipped near the stone, and they said, "This stone was always set up at the eastern entrance of the village." I have no doubt that it was in some way connected with Sun-worship.

At a certain festival in October it is customary for the women who tend cattle—the *Rautains*—to go to each house in the village and to make a design on the outside of the house, near the doorway, with red and white paint. This design made on the wall is called "*hāthā*." The figure is always the same, and it seems to be a representation of the sun shedding his rays on every side. The people themselves offer no explanation as to what is represented. All that they say is, "Our fathers have always done this," and "To leave it undone would be unlucky." The woman who paints the design receives a gift of paddy or some other seed-grain.

The River Goddess.

It is not surprising that the rivers also are regarded with reverence, largely mingled with fear, when we consider what an important part is played by flowing water in a tropical country. All the rivers in the Bilaspore district are spoken of as "*Gangā Mai*"—that is to say, "Mother Ganges." When a river is in high flood it is said that the "Mother," or the goddess who presides over the stream, has been annoyed, and must in some way be appeased and propitiated. Rice, clarified butter (*ghī*), and a few grains of gold, together with a burning lamp—a *chirāg*—are sent floating down the stream. Prayers are then addressed to the goddess.

If these offerings appear to have no effect on the flooded stream, the anxious people will bring out the *kapilā gai*, or the brown-coloured cow, as a last resource. The cow, being placed on the banks of the stream, is milked in such a way that the "juice of the cow"—the "*goras*"—may fall into the waters of the quickly rising current. A very high flood is spoken of as the "mad flood" (*baihā purā*). There is also a very firm belief that the goddess of every river rests for just a few moments in the dead of night: at that time, it is said, the waters of the stream cease flowing and they stand perfectly still. It is absolutely necessary to attain a certain degree of sanctity in order to see the river goddess taking her nocturnal rest.

Local Gods.

Local gods and goddesses are very numerous. Visitors from Northern and Southern India have sometimes commented on the absence of temples in Bilaspore district. This, however, must not be taken as an indication of the absence of gods, for their name is truly legion. The following history of one of these gods is illustrative of many others. A *Hindu* pilgrim, returning from the great shrine at Jagganāth Puri and bound for his home in North India, was taken ill in the neighbourhood of a certain village settled with Christians. This pilgrim was advanced in years, and he died near the village. In the absence of his relatives and caste-fellows, he was buried by the Christians near their own burial-ground. In a very short time it was said, "That the old pilgrim was to be seen roaming around in the small hours of the morning." It was darkly whispered that he was angry with the neighbouring *Hindus* for having allowed his body to be buried by

the Christians of the village. In order to give peace to his troubled spirit a stone was set up in that locality, and for a while offerings of cocoanuts and rice were made in the name of the *Hindu* pilgrim from Jagganāth.

Another similar narrative will enable the reader to understand the fear of local spirits. An old *Satnāmi Chamār* named Gobardhan, to whom reference will be made in another chapter, died and was buried in the locality where the writer long resided. For some years after his decease his grave was plastered over with earth and painted at regular intervals. Once a year for three days in succession a lamp was left burning at the head of the grave. After a time, however, the relatives became indifferent in their attendance at the grave of the old man Gobardhan. One year, when the people had neglected to plaster and paint the grave, it so happened that one of the best milch-buffaloes belonging to the relatives of the deceased was grazing in the neighbourhood of the graveyard when it was suddenly taken seriously ill. It fell down, foaming at the mouth, and having repeated convulsions. An unprejudiced spectator would immediately say, "Snake-bite; probably a *cobra* or a *karait*." But not so the simple village-folk; to them the writhings and contortions signified possession by a spirit. They proceeded to find out whose spirit was troubling the buffalo. A lamp was therefore lighted and the names of various deceased persons were mentioned by a man seated before the lamp. The flame, he said, flickered at the name of Gobardhan. Again he addressed the flame, asking if the spirit was annoyed because his grave had been neglected; again the flame was seen to flicker. Verily it was the spirit of Gobardhan that troubled the

buffalo. The animal died, and the village people were convinced that they should not neglect the grave of Gobardhan, who had punished them for their negligence.

Stone-heaps.

In some parts of Bilaspore there may be seen heaps of stone, which are known as *kuriyā*, from the word *kurhonā*, meaning to heap or pile-up. Just how and why the practice was started the people cannot explain; but to this day every one who passes a *kuriyā* will take up a stone and throw it on the pile. This, they say, has been done as long as they can remember. The reader will doubtless recall the burial of Absalom in 2 Sam. xviii. 17. We read that he was thrown into a pit, and they "raised over him a very great heap of stones" (R.V.). On this text Adam Clark makes the following comment: "This was the method of burying heroes and even traitors. . . . The cairns or heaps of stone in different parts of the world are of this kind." Col. Meadows Taylor, in his book entitled "Tara," describes similar heaps in the Maratha country of Western India. Much remains to be said about the objects of worship in the Bilaspore district, but attention must now be turned to another subject.

Festivals.

The festivals take place mostly between the months of June and November. This period, which also corresponds with the rainy season, is sometimes called "The Season of Festivals." There are twenty-three from June to November and only six during the rest of the year. The changes in the moon are always noticed with interest, for the *Hindus* calculate according to the

lunar month ; each month begins with the full moon, and is divided into two parts, the dark and the light half. They have only fifteen dates, and these are repeated twice during the month. So in order to adjust matters, every three years one month is repeated twice over. For instance, some years there are two *Jeths* or two *Srāvans* in succession.

On the fourth of the dark half of *Bhador* is the festival in memory of a famous cow named Bahurā. The story of this cow runs as follows :—

Once upon a time there was a king named Rājā Chandrāgetu. He had a herd of one thousand cows, and amongst these was one named Bahurā. This cow was large and beautiful to behold, and she gave milk continually without ever ceasing. One day it so happened the herd of cows was grazing when the great cow Bahurā became separated from the rest and wandered away into the cave of a tiger. Just then the tiger came out of his den and was greatly delighted at seeing so delicious a feast awaiting him. Addressing the cow he told her to prepare to die, for he was about to kill her. The cow Bahurā begged of the tiger not to commit so great a sin as to kill a cow, but the tiger replied that since she must die at some time, why should she object to becoming a portion of so great a being as a tiger. The cow then said to the tiger that since he was determined to eat her, she wished to go and see her young calf to whom she had not yet given milk, and after once feeding the calf she would return to the den and allow herself to be killed. The tiger laughed at the cow and asked her if she thought that he was going to let so sweet a morsel get away from him. Again the cow begged of the tiger, and took a vow that if she should not return the curse that comes

on one who kills a *Brāhman* should come on her. Again she vowed that if she did not return the unhappiness of the woman who knows that her husband loves some one better than herself should be hers. The tiger seeing that the cow had taken these great and terrible vows, allowed her to go and give milk to her young calf. When the cow had fed her young she said to the calf, "Now I am about to leave you to fulfil my promise to the tiger." But the calf declared that if the mother was to die she would die also. All the persuasions of the mother could not deter the calf from following her to the cave of the tiger. The tiger on seeing the cow had come back was greatly amazed at her fidelity, but nevertheless he was preparing to feast on her. Just then the chariots of the gods descended from the heavens to take up the faithful cow and her calf. But the cow refused to go. She said: "First let this tiger be taken up to heaven; then I wish my keeper, the herdsman, to be taken; after that let all the cattle in my herd be taken; then I wish the king of my country to go and all his subjects; last of all I will go myself." The gods were so overcome with the unselfishness of the cow that they gave orders that the whole country should immediately ascend to the heavens with the faithful Bahurā. And so to the present day a festival is observed in memory of Bahurā, and at this festival earthen images of a cow and a tiger are worshipped.

The Festival of Stilts.

During the Festival of Stilts, which comes next in order, it is the practice of boys and young men to make stilts, and use them for fifteen days in succession. These stilts are made by tying a small piece of bamboo

at right angles to a long bamboo, and this cross-piece is used as a foot-rest. The foot-rest is not nailed, but is tied with twine, which makes a creaking sound at every step, and adds immensely to the enjoyment of the young people. At the end of the fifteen days it is customary to make cakes, and to take these, together with the stilts, down to the river-side. Here the stilts are stacked together like so many rifles in a guard-room ; incense is burned near the stilts, and then the young people sit down to eat their cakes. After this the foot-rests are untied from the bamboos, and one foot-piece is thrown into the river while the other piece is buried in the sand or is taken home and hidden in the yard. The long bamboos are placed in the roof to be used again the following season. After this festival the potters make earthen images of cows and bullocks and earthen grinding-mills, and sell them to parents for the amusement of their children. This appears to be a season set apart especially for the enjoyment of the younger generation.

The Tija Fast.

The *Tija* Fast is observed only by women, and it takes place on the third day of the light half of the lunar month of *Bhādor*. On this day, and the night which follows, women will not touch a morsel of food. They make images of a god and goddess and bow down before these images. It is said that Pārbati's father, Himāchal, wished her to be married to some one other than Māhādev, the god of her choice ; she thereupon hid herself in the woods, and, making an image of Māhādev, she worshipped it, that she might be faithful to him alone. Māhādev, her lover, came upon her in the woods, bowing before his image, and

he then decreed that all good women, for all time, should fast on that day in memory of his faithful Pārbati. The women who did not fast, he said, would have no children for seven successive incarnations. To the present day this Fast of *Tija* (or the third) is strictly observed by all *Hindu* women.

The Fortnight of the Manes.

The festival known as the Fortnight of the Manes—*Pitr Pāk*—occurs about September. It is believed that during this fortnight it is the practice of all the departed to come and visit their relatives. The homes are therefore cleaned, and the spaces in front of the house are plastered and painted in order to be pleasing to those who are expected. It is believed that the departed will return on the very date on which they went away. A father who left on the fourth, be it the fourth of the dark half or the light half of the moon, will return to visit his family on the fourth of the Fortnight of the Manes. On that date cakes are prepared, and with certain ceremony these are offered to the unseen hovering spirit. Their implicit belief is that the spirit will partake of the essence of the food, and that which remains—the material portion—may be eaten by members of the family. The souls of women, it is said, will all come on the ninth of the fortnight. On the thirteenth come those who have met with a violent death and who lost their lives by a fall, by snake-bite, or any other unusual cause. During the Fortnight of the Manes a woman is not supposed to put on new bangles and a man is not permitted to shave. In short, this is a season of sad remembrances, an annual festival for the departed.

Dashahrā and Holi.

It is not necessary to enter into details concerning the *Dashahrā* beyond mentioning one practice, which seems to be peculiar to Bilaspore. The fishermen go around from house to house with a fishing-net, and this they throw over the child of any prominent person. It is supposed to bring good luck to the family, and the fisherman is then rewarded with gifts of coppers or grain. The *Holi* festival has also been described by other writers. It is widely observed in the Bilaspore district. When small-pox is about, however, the people are afraid to use the indecent language which is permitted at this season. They say the goddess of small-pox, "the *mātā*," will be annoyed, and hence they refrain from the use of the usual songs and exclamations. The *holi* fire is started by a *Gond* or a *Baigā*, or one of the aboriginal tribes. The fire is invariably obtained in the first place from the *chak-mack*, or the flint and steel. Ashes of the *holi* fire are preserved, with the belief that they are the means of exorcising evil spirits.

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CHAPTER III

Agriculture

"Go about the fields with me."—SHAKESPEARE.

Checking and Producing Rain.

IT has already been stated that the people of Bilaspore are largely agricultural, and that one of their principal crops is rice. The success or failure of the rice harvest depends very much on the rainfall, for rice needs rain well distributed. Now the farmers have a firm belief that certain individuals have the power to cause the rain to cease. It is said that the grain-dealer, who has stored quantities of grain, will gather some rain-water from the eaves of his house in an earthen vessel. This he buries under the grinding-mill, and from that time forward, it is said, thunder will be heard rumbling in the distance like the grinding of the flour-mill, but there will be no more rain, for the grain-dealer has bound the rain.

In order to produce rain the people resort to many strange practices. One of these is to build a huge earthen image of Bhimsen, one of the heroic gods. This is usually an obscene figure, and cannot be described. On seeing the obscenity of the image, it is said that the gods will send rain. One year, when the

rain had ceased at a critical time, the children went around from village to village, and as they went they shouted over and over again the following words, which are rhythmical when rightly pronounced in the vernacular :—

"Mengh Rājā pāni de,
Dhān Kodo pākan de."

Being freely translated, this means "King Cloud give us rain, that Paddy and Kodo may ripen." On inquiring as to why the children, and not their elders, shouted these words, I was told "that the children were not as sinful as their elders, and the gods were more likely to hear their prayers." When there was a heavy fall of rain after this shouting, the people were positive that the rain had come in answer to the prayers of their children.

Sowing.

The old man Gobardhan—whose spirit was supposed to have troubled the buffalo, as already mentioned—was considered a very successful farmer, and I remember he invariably began his sowing on a Sunday. It is usual for the more important farmers to consult an astrologer as to what day they should begin sowing. The man I have named, however, always began on a Sunday. Possibly this practice was also in some way connected with sun-worship, for it should be borne in mind that our first day of the week is with the *Hindus* also *Rabi-Vār*, literally Sun Day. Many of the farmers make it a practice to burn incense and break a cocoanut in the field where they begin their sowing. After the sowing of the winter crops, such as wheat, gram (a coarse pea), castor seed, &c., it is customary to

take the plough around the field and to sow in a circle in several rows. This finishing off of the sowing is called *bihānā*, meaning to wed or marry. The plough which is used for this purpose invariably has a mass of damp earth placed at the point where the handle of the plough meets the tongue. To the ordinary observer this has no special significance. It must be noticed, however, that this lump of damp earth on the plough is called the *Rautain*, that is to say, "the milk-woman." If you ask the farmer why he calls this by so uncommon a name, he can offer no explanation; all he knows is that it has been done for many generations past, and that all the farmers have the *Rautain* on the plough when sowing the cold-weather crops, and that they all "wed" the field by going around several times before leaving it. Now while it is out of my province to theorise and to find a reason for the facts I mention, I take the liberty of quoting from a section entitled, "Blessing the Cornfields," in Longfellow's "Hiawatha." The words are as follows :—

"Once when all the maize was planted,
Hiawatha wise and thoughtful,
Spake and said to Minnehaha,
To his wife the Laughing Water :-
You shall bless to-night the cornfields,
Draw a magic circle round them
To protect them from destruction,
Blast of mildew, blight of insect.
In the night when all is silence,
In the night, when all is darkness,
Rise up from your bed in silence,
Lay aside your garments wholly,
Walk around the fields you planted,
Round the borders of the cornfields,
Covered by your tresses only.
Robed with darkness as a garment

From her bed rose Laughing Water,
Laid aside her garments wholly,
And with darkness clothed and guarded,
Unashamed and unaffrighted,
Drew the sacred magic circle
Of her footprints round the cornfields."

It is for the specialist to say whether the practice of "wedding" the fields in Bilaspore is the "survival" of a belief similar to that in other places, that nudity has some influence in protecting fields from "Blast of mildew, blight of insect."

It is said that when peas are being sown, if iron should come into contact with the seeds they will remain hard and will not germinate. When peas are being boiled, also it is considered unwise to use an iron spoon, for the peas will remain tough and will take long to boil. With regard to the sowing of linseed, there is a belief that if the seed is sown from a woollen blanket, and cattle graze in a field in which such seed has grown, they will surely die. A certain farmer whom I questioned on this subject refused to offer any information. He said "that it was a practice, which the evil-minded indulged in, and he preferred not to speak about it." I found the same practice in the Damoh district some three hundred miles from Bilaspore. When the last sheaf of the harvest is cut it is customary to throw it high up into the air and sing meanwhile some indecent songs, such as are used in the Holi Festival.

The Threshing-floor.

In connection with the threshing-floor there are numerous superstitions. For instance, it is deemed unlucky if one who has ridden on an elephant should enter the threshing-floor. On the other hand, if one

who has ridden on a tiger should enter he will bring good luck. When the people who live near the jungles trap a tiger-cub, they take the animal around from village to village, and the farmers and others pay a small fee to have their children placed on the back of the tiger. I was also told that a prosperous *Gond* farmer, who lived near the jungles, would not begin his threshing operations until a tiger had left his track across the threshing-floor. He would entice the animal there by causing the sheep to bleat or the cattle to low. To enter a threshing-floor wearing shoes is considered unlucky. When the grain has been threshed, and is awaiting measurement, a few twigs of the Baer-tree (*Zizyphus vulgaris*) are placed on the stack of grain in order to keep away the invisible *matiyā* or goblin, who does away with grain and makes it measure less than was expected.

When the grain has been threshed and the first load is being carried to the house to be stored, the farmer's wife comes out to meet the labourer who is carrying the grain. She carries in her hand the *lotā*, or brass water vessel, and she sprinkles water on every side ; then she goes around the man bearing the grain and makes obeisance as she goes. This practice refers to the first load of grain brought in from the threshing-floor.

Additional Practices.

A child was late in speaking and the parents were asked the cause. They replied "that some one had inadvertently placed the child on a granary." There is a wide-spread belief that granaries cause dumbness. It is considered unlucky to sweep out a granary, for this would signify sweeping out prosperity. When grain is being measured, it is customary at each pause to throw

a handful of grain back into the measure, that it may never be empty. The heavy pestle used for cleaning rice is locally known as a *musāl*. It is said that if a *musāl* is placed upright in a plate of water during an eclipse it will stand without support. A winnowing-fan, called a *supā*, is never placed on a cart when travelling because, they say, it would make the cart heavy and impede progress. The agricultural cart of the district is a *gārā*. It is made of solid wooden wheels with no spokes, and is well adapted for crossing fields and embankments. During the rainy season these carts are taken to pieces and put together at the close of the wet months. When the *gārā* is again made ready for use after the rainy season, it is sometimes bathed in milk for good luck, and invariably the wheels are marked with the impress of the hand dipped in oil. This practice is known as "*hāthā denā*," or, to "give the hand-mark." For want of a more suitable place it may here be mentioned that there is a prejudice against sowing seeds of mangoes which have been eaten. The fruit grown from such seeds would be considered *jhuttha*, *i.e.*, impure. This word is used for food left in a plate after eating.

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CHAPTER IV

Curious Remedies

"*Stand not amazed; here is no remedy.*"—SHAKESPEARE.

Infant Treatment.

EVERY mother considers it necessary to massage her infant child at least twice every day. She sits on the ground with the infant in her lap, and by her side is a low fire. First the child is oiled, then the mother places one hand over the fire and the other on the babe, and thus with rapid movements she will massage the infant with each hand alternately, singing meanwhile some soothing lullaby. This simple method of fomentation is supposed to remove flatulence; but at times a more severe remedy is adopted. An iron sickle is placed in the fire till it is made red-hot, and the point is then applied to the abdomen in six or eight different places. If flatulence is very persistent, a still more severe remedy is used as a last resort. A few double pice (coppers) are heated in the fire, they are then taken up with pincers and applied to the surface of the skin, leaving a burn the size of a pice. I believe it may be stated without exaggeration that fully 90 per cent. (if not more) of the natives of Bilaspore carry in their bodies, even when fully grown, the marks of some

form of infant branding. When adults are troubled with rheumatism, or when they are suffering from sprains, they will have their arms or legs or waists branded with a red-hot iron. Some may incline to the opinion that these remedies are employed merely as counter-irritants, but it seems to me that the question is worth considering as to whether there is not some connection here with the very wide-spread belief, in other places, that changelings and witches are afraid of fire and iron. I think few will doubt that the following practice has some connection with the

Belief in Changelings.

The most common means of carrying loads in Bilaspore is by means of a pole or bamboo four or five feet in length, having at each end a swing made of strong twine or rope. The burdens are placed in these two swings, and the *kāwar*, or bamboo, is then lifted on the shoulders so that the loads swing at each end. Now, in going in and out among the villages, one frequently sees at the place where two roads cross each other a rudely-made *kāwar* lying in the centre of the road. On one side will be seen an old, broken basket filled with cow-dung, on the other side is an empty basket, also old and broken. I had seen this object for many years before I learned its significance. When a child is emaciated and loses flesh, the custom is for the maternal uncle, or some near relative, though preferably the former, to make a *kāwar*, and weigh the infant against cow dung, then, in the early morning, before the crowing of the cock, to place it at the crossing of two roads. The people believe that by so doing the ailment of the child who was weighed will go to the infant of the father who first happens to cross the road. This practice is known

as "*barouti*," and there are many other details, but the most salient points have now been mentioned.

Opium for Infants.

Opium is regarded not as an infant remedy, but as a requisite for their daily use. Since the people belong mostly to the labouring classes, and the mothers have to go out to work as well as the fathers, they consider a sedative absolutely necessary. Apart from the children of some of the Christians who have been trained in mission orphanages, I do not think it would be possible to find a single infant of the natives of *Chhattisgarh* who is not given opium daily, from a few weeks old up to two or three years. When a housewife, returning from the weekly bazaars, is questioned as to what she has purchased, the reply is very often "opium and salt," and the one who attempts to dispute the wisdom of using opium, and dwells on its injurious effects, is put down as a fool of the first degree, who knows little or nothing of local conditions. Their fathers and mothers, they will say, were brought up on opium, therefore the rising generation is also given this sedative, and, as far as the people seem to care to the contrary, it will continue to be used for ever and for aye.

Various Remedies.

Rat's flesh is supposed to be fattening and is given to emaciated children, and also to cattle, that they may be fattened. It is considered desirable to have a monkey tied in the stable of a horse, for any disease which may possibly attack a horse will, it is said, go to the monkey instead. Out of this practice there has risen a very common saying which is used when one person has to suffer for another. It runs as follows: "*Ghorā kā rog*

bandar men jae," i.e., " The disease of the horse gone to the monkey."

There is a belief that the cause of styes is in some way connected with a dog. One of the most common remedies has to do with the *Dalhan Pāhar*, the hill which suddenly rises from the plains of Bilaspore. It is said that if one who is suffering in this way would face this hill and say, " The Dalhan hill is small but my stye is big," the swelling on his eye will feel complimented and will soon disappear.

An eclipse is believed to have a bad effect on granaries and on all life not yet born. In order to protect grain from losing its germinating power, a circular mark is made on the side of the granary with cow dung, and this same means is employed to remove the supposed evil influence of an eclipse on animals. In the case of a cow, for instance, or of a woman, a mark is made on the left side with *gobur, i.e.*, cow dung, for it is said that the offspring would be deformed if this precaution was not taken. I once inquired as to the cause of a lad's lameness, and I was told that " the eclipse had drawn up his leg" ; in other words, his deformity was prenatal.

A decayed tooth is said to be due to a boring insect, which causes the pain. The patient, in this case, is given a hollow bamboo and seated near a low fire in which a particular leaf is burning. One end of the bamboo is over the smoke of the burning leaf and the other end is placed in the mouth near the decayed tooth. It is believed that the boring insect will be smoked out of the tooth, and it will fall through the hollow bamboo into the fire, and the pain will then cease. The gum of some of the many Indian figs is used to fill the cavity of a decayed tooth.

There are certain persons who profess to remove the pain which results from the sting of a scorpion. They use numerous incantations and make many mesmeric passes over the affected part. People with a very black skin are believed to be specially susceptible to the pain from scorpion stings. I know of some persons who are immune to the sting of a scorpion, for I have seen them stung, and the only discomfort they had was described as similar to the smarting which is felt when a tender skin is rubbed with red-pepper. It is said that if a woman is stung by a scorpion when she is in a delicate state of health, her offspring will be immune to the scorpion sting.

Cholera.

When cholera occurs in a village, it is customary for the neighbouring villages "to be made," that is to say, the inhabitants will come together and raise a collection for the purpose of employing a *Baigā*, or one of the aboriginal medicine men, to offer sacrifices and beseech of the cholera goddess to pass by their village. At the boundary of the hamlet they hoist a flag on a tall bamboo, and near this flag they place a miniature cart. This is for the goddess to ride in when she passes by their boundary line. The suddenness with which cholera does its work is sometimes so appalling that really it is not surprising that the people in their ignorance suppose that some great unseen being is moving in their midst. One evening I was riding away from a village after visiting some cholera patients, when a villager ran out and asked me for sugar. He complained of burning inside, and there is a firm belief that sugar is cooling in its effects. I promised to bring it for him the next morning. When I went to the place at nine

o'clock the next day I asked for the man Mahesh. The people pointed to a group of men in the distance who were digging a grave. They then told me that Mahesh was taken ill with cholera after his evening meal, and had died at four in the morning. A *Brāhman* woman, who would have spat on me with contempt if I had dared to enter her house under ordinary circumstances, eagerly drank water from the vessel I held, when she was in the throes of anguish, and deserted by all her own people during an attack of this fell disease. Iron, it is believed, will keep off cholera; and so during an epidemic you will see the people going round with either axes or sickles in their hands. Their horses are not shod, otherwise they might possibly nail horse-shoes to the door, but their belief is more primitive; for with them iron does not *bring* good luck, but it *scares away* the evil spirits, so when a man has had an epileptic fit he will wear an iron bracelet to keep away the evil spirit which was supposed to have possessed him.

Small-pox.

Early in the year 1904 there was a small-pox epidemic in the town of Mungeli, and I had ample opportunity of making many interesting observations. The conclusion I came to was, that during the epidemic the people feel that there is some strong personality in their midst, and all their efforts are with the purpose of pleasing this great power, or influence, or person. As is usually the case, they believe what would please themselves will please this great being or power. The *mātā* ("mother") or *devi* ("goddess") is supposed to be visiting the family in which there is a case of small-pox. It is not considered a misfortune but rather an honour. The yard

of the house in which the patient lies is surrounded by a hedge of thorns or dried twigs. The purpose of this is to keep away persons whose presence will annoy the goddess and to hinder persons with shod feet approaching the house. Some one is always in attendance on the patient, and every word he may utter is considered the word of the goddess. If the patient requests water, the attendants will say, "The goddess is thirsty," and will bring the coldest, purest water obtainable. In the delirium all the wild sayings of the patient are considered the utterances of the great person in their midst. The behests of this person must be complied with, however difficult and repulsive. If the patient says he wants food from the house of a scavenger, it must be supplied rather than incur the wrath of the goddess. Once a man walked eight miles to ask for food from my table. The reason was that his daughter had small-pox, and when asked what she wanted, she was understood to say she wanted food from the *sahib's* house, and the father begged me to give him some. On several occasions the people have come asking for the fruit of the *papiyā* from my garden, as the *mātā* had asked for this fruit. If the goddess should demand a hen, the hen will be purchased and tied near the bed of the patient. It is said that a hen with reversed feathers is the one most appreciated. During a small-pox epidemic I have known poultry with reversed feathers to sell at an exorbitant price. Sometimes a goat is tied in the house of the patient and daintily fed in the name of the goddess, with a promise that it will be slaughtered in the event of the patient's recovery. Every evening in each house in which there is a small-pox patient music is heard and songs are sung in praise of the goddess. Musical instruments are also

employed, more especially the drum. The friends of the patient will sit up all night, and if the patient is in distress nothing is done to alleviate the suffering; but the friends perplex themselves in trying to find out what they have done to annoy the goddess or what they have omitted to do which will please her.

One evening I questioned a young man passing my gate as to where he was going. He replied he was going to join his friends, who were to watch by the house of a caste-fellow who had small-pox. On inquiring why he was going to watch he replied, "In case a dog or a cat should come near the house at night and annoy the goddess." I asked how long the friend had had the sickness. He replied, "Six years." On seeing my perplexity he explained that they say *year* for *day* in speaking of this illness. I then asked how much longer he expected his friend would be sick. He replied, "Eight or ten years."

When the epidemic was abating in the town of Mungeli the following story was told round and about the town, and was believed to be true by all who heard and all who told it. A certain *Bania*, whose name was given, went from Mungeli to the neighbouring town of Nawagarh. On his return after dark he came upon seven women seated by fires on the roadside. He addressed them as "friends," and asked them for fire to light his *birhi* (pipe). They paid no attention to him, and he noticed their fires had no smoke and that they burned steadily. He then went his way on horseback. His *syce*, or groom, came behind him, and met these same women. They said to the *syce*, "Your master addressed us as friends, and we have destroyed two of his children. Tell him we have done our work in Mungeli, and are now going to Nawagarh."

This story was believed to account for the sudden cessation of the disease in Mungeli and its as sudden appearance in Nawagarh just at that time.

I have been told that when the disease first appears on a person he is seated on a bed and his feet are bathed with great ceremony. The water in which his feet are washed must be taken from a running stream, and the water must be taken up in a vessel drawn against the current, and not in the direction in which the water is flowing. When the sickness has left the patient his entire body is bathed with great ceremony either on a Monday or a Thursday. Several months after the patient has recovered, the people have the ceremony of *Vidā karo*, that is, "sending away" the goddess, as some visitor is sent off, with ceremony. Special food is prepared, and the family party all wear new clothes, and with music and procession they all proceed to the river, where food and small articles are thrown into the stream.

A Case of Possession.

On the night of August 9, 1901, I had the following experience with a man said to be possessed by the devil. At eleven o'clock I was called to the Leper Asylum, of which I was Superintendent, to see a leper named Visahu, who was laid hold of by *Shaitān* (Satan). It was a dark, drizzling night, and I went to the Asylum lantern in hand. Approaching the gate of the Asylum I heard many loud voices, for the lepers were greatly excited, and I could also hear the grinding of teeth from the unfortunate man. This was heard at a distance of fully one hundred yards. On approaching the crowd I found the leper Visahu, a man of medium physique, lying on the ground on his chest, struggling violently, while two men were seated on him trying to keep him

down. They told me he was making efforts to run away from them, and as the river was not far off they feared he would drown himself. I immediately ordered the men to loosen their hold of him, and I talked with him calmly and firmly and tried to pacify him. Meanwhile I noted the wild, meaningless look in his eyes, as though he was terribly frightened. He was trembling, shaking from head to foot, his teeth were grinding, and I was convinced it was not a case of shamming. I concluded he was in a fit of some kind. Ordering the ammonia bottle from the hospital, I led Visahu to his own room and had his bed put in readiness.

As we were about to enter his room the man broke away from me, and rushing through the lepers who had gathered around, he went straight for the gate. I went after him as fast as possible, and the crowd followed me. Visahu ran straight into the graveyard close by; seeing this the crowd hung back, and only two attendants followed me as I ran after the man over the *Chamār* graves. With shod feet and with a lantern we had difficulty in following the man because of the cactus thorns and the ditches full of water. He, however, did not seem to heed these, and ran along barefooted over the graves and the thorns to the other end of the graveyard, where he plunged into a ditch full of water. When we overtook him he sat quaking and grinding his teeth, staring around wildly. I again laid hold of his arm and led him back to the Asylum and seated him in the chapel. Here I kept him under my gaze, talked with him, and poured water between his set teeth. For some time he gazed at me stolidly, with a vacant look and without blinking; there was no intelligence in his face. In the meantime the ammonia was brought from the hospital. He did not seem

affected by it. After about ten minutes in the chapel, his face changed, he looked around to the others and said, "Why have you brought me here?" He seemed like one waking from sleep. He felt the mud and water on his body and asked why we had thrown water on him. I asked him where he had been; he said "Nowhere!" He had no recollection of having acted strangely. He then became conscious of the bruise on his knee and the thorns which had become embedded in his feet. On questioning him I learned that he had been on leave from the Asylum and had returned that morning, walking some eight miles. After a night meal, he sat in the corner of his room playing on a long bamboo flute which has a deep, monotonous tone. His wife was also in the room. After playing for some time he arose and went to the door to go out. Outside the door he said he saw a figure, and exclaimed, "What is this?" Immediately he fell forward, and that is all he could remember.

I am positive that this was not a case of shamming. I am also positive that he did not recall what took place, that he had no recollection of what happened from the time I saw him on the ground to the time he "came to himself" in the chapel. I am also certain that he was not under the influence of an intoxicant. This case puzzled me for a long while. Everything seemed to support the theory of demon possession. Since this experience I have studied the subject of hypnotism, and I am now of opinion that this so-called "case of possession" was actually a case of auto-hypnotism. The man playing his flute in a monotonous tone for a long time (probably gazing at the light) brought himself into the hypnotic state when he was susceptible to any outside suggestion. Seeing a shadow,

may he not have taken this to be a spirit about to possess him? Then the cries of his neighbours "*Shaitān lagā hai*" (Satan has possessed him) would still further deepen the impression, or, technically, the "suggestion," until he actually became to himself a man possessed. I have seen persons coming out of the hypnotic state, and the way in which consciousness returned to them reminded me of the way in which the leper came to himself and was first conscious of his bruises. I mention this case with the only explanation which suggests itself to me. Perhaps I should say again that there was no history of the use of intoxicants. Need I add that all the lepers and all the neighbours were fully convinced that it was *Shaitān* who possessed the man, and the *Shaitān* was supposed to be the spirit of a leper who had died fifteen days before and was buried in the graveyard into which Visahu took us on that memorable night in August.

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CHAPTER V

Births and Marriages

"The owl shriek'd at the birth—an evil omen."

"Money buys lands, and wives are sold by fate."

SHAKESPEARE.

IN the present chapter, and in another which comes later, the ordinary reader will find some details that may seem puerile and perhaps coarse; it would have been an easy matter to cut out such portions and to embellish the subjects sufficiently to make them merely pleasing, but this is precisely what the students of folk-lore protest against. They ask for the bare, unvarnished facts, and these I have endeavoured to supply throughout this book. Having in view the threefold object for which this work was prepared—to prove of service to the student, to the local inquirer, and to the supporter of missions—it has been necessary in places to sacrifice the interest of one class of readers for that of the other, and so the significance and value of many of the points mentioned in the present chapter will perhaps be rightly appreciated only by the students of folk-lore.

Prenatal Practices.

About two months before the arrival of the first born it is customary for the nearest relatives to prepare some dainty dishes and to take them to the house of the woman, that she may taste them. Those who can afford to do so will also take pieces of clothing, and these are presented together with the tasty food. This practice is known as *sādhouri*, a name probably connected with the word *sādh*, meaning "desire, longing." Prolonged pregnancy is supposed to be due to the influence of a horse, for, it is said, that if a woman should step across a string by which a horse is tied, her term will be prolonged to the time required by a mare, that is, eleven months. In order to remove this evil influence the woman must take a quantity of grain in her *sāri*, or garment, and present this grain to the animal which is supposed to have affected her. The horse having eaten of the grain, she will be relieved of the malign influence.

Birth Practices.

If delivery is prolonged and painful, the woman is taken to another house. The hair is never allowed to remain knotted during delivery, the underlying idea being that of "sympathetic magic," *i.e.*, if the hair is bound the child will also be bound. Immediately the child is born, cotton is stuffed into the mother's ears; this is said to keep out the wind. It is also said that if a male child is born face downwards he will grow up effeminate, and *vice-versa*. When a child is born it is often welcomed with several slaps, and is called all manner of bad names; the more it is appreciated the more marked will be this feigned displeasure, for by so doing it is supposed that possible evil influences will

be kept away. When a mother has lost several children she will sometimes go through the formality of selling her child to a neighbour before it is born for the sum of five or ten shells or *kouries*. Since one hundred and twenty shells make one farthing, the child is supposed to be sold for one twelfth, or one twenty-fourth of a farthing. In such a case the child goes through life with the name' *Pach-kour* (five shells) or *Das-kour* (ten shells.) In this case also the idea is to keep off evil influences: In the Christian community with which I am associated there is a boy with the Christian name Lazarus, and the vernacular name *Pach-kour*. An exact translation of his name may be given as " Lazarus worth Five Shells."

Returning to the subject of birth-practices, it must be mentioned that after childbirth it is deemed advisable to have an old shoe on the bed, or an iron sickle hidden under the bedclothes. The cord is cut with a broken piece of tile or with a split bamboo, one of the first knives devised by prehistoric man. Students of primitive sociology tell us that womenkind and the priesthood have been two of the most conservative factors in social life. The use of the split bamboo and the prejudice to the use of metal for the purpose mentioned seems additional evidence as regards the first factor, while the lighting of the *holi* fire with flint by the *Baigā* priest, as already recorded, seems a case in point with regard to the second. After confinement a woman is not permitted to have food and drink for three days, and then she is given a mixture containing many roots and herbs. It is not unusual to see a mother moving around the room on the day of delivery, and on one occasion a mother carried her infant child for nine miles within a week after its birth. Midwives

are usually of the *Chamār* caste, and also of the *Nagārchi* or musician caste. Ordinarily a woman receives two annas, or twopence, for delivering a girl, and four annas for a boy ; she also receives a piece of cloth. Amongst the well-to-do it is customary for the infant to be placed in a *supā* or winnowing-fan, which is filled with rice, and the child is placed on the rice, and then the grain is given to the nurse in attendance. This woman also goes to the headman of the village and to the nearest relatives of the new-born babe, and with cow dung she makes a circular mark with a dot in the centre near the main entrance of their houses. On seeing this mark the head of the house presents the nurse with grain or money.

Marriages.

Restrictions with regard to the marriage of cousins have already been mentioned in connection with the *Gotra*. It is interesting to note that the feeling in reference to consanguineous marriages is such that marital relations are not permissible between couples who bear the names of near relatives. For instance, a boy may not marry a girl who bears the name of his mother, grandmother, aunt, sister, or any other near relative. The feeling on this question goes still further, for two women whose husbands have the same name consider themselves in some way connected, even though they be of different castes ; so also with two men whose wives bear the same name, they consider themselves in some way connected. Numerous other examples may be given, which go to show that there is a belief that a name is very intimately connected with a person, that it is, in short, a part of himself.

Marriage by Capture.

When the bridegroom's party is approaching the house of the bride for the marriage ceremony a mock-fight takes place between the friends of the bride and those of the bridegroom. First they dance before each other in a threatening manner, swinging their sticks, or *lāthis*, around their heads, and the bride's friends gradually fall back as though they were being defeated, and allow the bridegroom's friends to strike the bridal canopy. Meantime the womenfolk throw about parched rice, called *murrā*, and make a pretence of defending themselves with brooms and winnowing-fans (*supās*).

On one occasion the bridegroom's party was so vigorous in its demonstration during this sham-fight that they actually hurt one of the bride's friends while swinging a stick. The result was both parties lost their temper and a free hand-to-hand fight ensued. Happily the quarrel was patched up sufficiently to allow the marriage ceremony to be completed ; but this opening incident threw a damper over their merry-making. Since the usual Hindu marriage ceremony has been described in detail by many a writer on India, I will confine myself to one or two practices which seem to be peculiar to Bilaspore.

Shooting the Deer.

While passing through a village I once noticed a figure made of straw, attached to a long bamboo and hanging over the roof of a house. On inquiring I was told that a marriage had recently taken place, and the straw figure was supposed to represent a deer. I also learned that it is customary, after a marriage, for the bride and bridegroom and all the friends to go to the

river, or tank, and wash off the turmeric with which the young couple have been painted during the ceremony. While this is being done the people indulge in a great amount of horseplay. A deer is made of straw, and a bow and arrow, made of bamboo, is placed in the hand of the bridegroom. He is not allowed to leave the river-side until he has succeeded in piercing the deer with his arrow. On doing this he gives chase to the bride and her friends, who all run towards her home. The deer is hoisted on a bamboo, and hangs over the house for many days after the marriage. Here, again, the reader will doubtless recall some lines in "Hiawatha's Wooing." They run as follows :—

"'Twixt the shadow and the sunshine
Herds of fallow deer were feeding,
But they saw not Hiawatha;
To his bow he whispered 'Fail not!'
To his arrow whispered 'Swerve not!'
Sent it singing on its errand
To the red heart of the roebuck,
Threw the deer across his shoulder,
And sped forward without pausing.

On her mat her hands lay idle,
And her eyes were very dreamy.
Through their thoughts they heard a footstep,
Heard a rustling in the branches.
And with glowing cheeks and forehead,
With the deer upon his shoulders,
Suddenly from out the woodlands
Hiawatha stood before them.

At the feet of Laughing Water
Hiawatha laid his burden,
Threw the red deer from his shoulders
And the maiden looked up at him,
Looked up from the mat of rushes,
Said, with gentle look and accent,
'You are welcome, Hiawatha!'"

In various parts of the world there may be found survivals of a fully established practice that before marriage a young man must show his dexterity in hunting. For instance, amongst the Eskimos a man must kill a certain number of seals before he can broach the subject of marriage. In Bilaspore amongst a certain class of *Chamārs*, who make shoes with fancy work in silver thread, worked on red cloth, a young girl is expected to show that she can do this form of needlework before the parents of the boy will complete the arrangements for a marriage.

In the event of a bachelor marrying a widow he alone goes through the marriage ceremony, for a woman may never engage in a marriage ceremony more than once. In such a case a bachelor is wedded to a dagger, and this takes the place of the bride throughout the ceremony. If a couple should have twenty-one children, rumour has it that they go through the marriage ceremony a second time together. Or again, if a couple should live to see their "grandchild's grandchild" they would do the same.

On the death of her husband, it is usual for the widow to go and live with her younger brother-in-law, called her *dewar*. In fact, during the lifetime of her husband intimacy with her *dewar* is not considered improper. If a family is too poor to arrange for the marriage of a younger brother this intimacy is even encouraged, and seems to point to the practice of polyandry. For a man to be intimate with a younger brother's wife, on the other hand, is considered a very great offence. The feeling on this subject is such that a man is not supposed to address his younger brother's wife, and he will never receive anything directly from her hand, nor will he mention her name. She is regarded as his daughter-in-law.

CHAPTER VI

Death, Burial, and the Hereafter

"Shall we rest here,
And by relating tales of others' griefs
See if 'twill teach us to forget our own?"

SHAKESPEARE.

THE howling of dogs, especially at night, is supposed to be due to their seeing the *Yam Dut*, or the Angel of Death. This is regarded as a portent of approaching death. A falling star is also supposed to be connected with the decease of some great personage. When the end of a sick person is apparently drawing near, he is taken off his bed and placed on the ground. At this time it is customary to put curds in his mouth, and also to bring in a calf, so that the patient may lay hold of its tail. A herdsman, in taking his cattle across a stream, will lay hold of the tail of one of the stronger animals, and in this way he is helped across with little or no exertion. The people believe that if they lay hold of the tail of a calf when dying, this sacred animal will help them across the River of Death. When life is extinct, immediate arrangements are made for the burial or burning. The higher castes invariably burn their dead, while the lower castes bury. The funeral party all proceed to the graveyard, and it is then only

that the digging commences, so there is, of necessity, a delay of several hours in the graveyard, and all who attend a funeral are supposed to help in digging. It is supposed to be meritorious to help in a burial, in fact there is a saying that if one could bury a hundred persons, at different times, all by himself, he would be born a *rājā*, or king, in the next incarnation. Only once have I seen a woman at a funeral, and this was at the cremation of a prominent *Brāhman*, when his widow was present. Amongst the lower castes the women remain in their homes till they hear that the burial is over, and then they walk in single file to the river or tank, to wash away the defilement supposed to be caused by a death in their midst. The chief mourners will lead this procession of women to the bathing place. No food must be cooked or eaten until after the burial and bathing; this, together with the necessities of the climate, accounts for the rapidity with which arrrangements are made for burial.

In the Graveyard.

When the grave has been filled and the mound has been raised, it is customary for those who attend to make five small balls of earth and place these at the head of the grave. This practice is called *pach lakriyā*, meaning "five sticks." It is said that in former days all who attended a burning would each take five pieces of firewood and help to increase the funeral pile. This practice has passed away, and instead those who attend each place five small twigs on the pile, while those who bury follow suit by placing balls of earth at the head of the grave. When this has been done they address the departed one and say, "*Jāo mājhi ke kok men avatār*

leo," which, being interpreted, means, "Go, become incarnate in some human being."

Those who have carried the bier to the graveyard will, after the burial, "remove the load from their shoulders," and in the vernacular this is called *Kāndh utārnā*. Each of the carriers takes a clod of earth, and with this he touches first the shoulder where the bier rested, next the waist, then the knee, and, lastly, he drops the clod on the ground near the feet. They believe that if this was not done the weight of the bier would be felt by the bearers for some time to come.

All the graves in Bilaspore district run from north to south, and when a cremation takes place the body is placed in this same position, with the head to the north. It is said that the River of Death runs to the south, and that is why the feet are placed in that direction. Another explanation is that in the *Sat Yug*, the Golden Age, the sun rose in the north, and in each succeeding age it has risen in another direction, till now in the *Kali Yug*, or the Age of Sin, it rises in the east. The head is placed to the north because it is believed that this is the best of the points of the compass. If a mother should die leaving very young children it is customary to tie her hands and feet before burial, and this is supposed to keep her from rising during the night and going to see her children. It is also believed that a mother will visit her home at night to nurse her infant child. At times ashes are placed in the doorway, and there are some who profess to trace the footprints of the dead when they cross the ashes to enter the house. Will-o'-the-wisp, or *Ignis fatuus*, is supposed to be the spirit of one who has died in seven successive incarnations without having gone through a marriage ceremony.

Burial of Gosais.

In a village called Dharmpura there may be seen, on the banks of an artificial lake, several ancient temples. The village people say that Dharmpura has been in the possession of a caste called *Gosais* for many generations, and under each of the temples there is buried a prominent man of this caste. It so happened that a *Gosai* of some importance died when I was in the neighbourhood, and I seized the opportunity of gathering from the eye-witnesses full information concerning the burial. Immediately after death the body was washed and covered with moist ashes. A deep hole was then dug in the high bank of the lake, and the body was placed in this hole in a sitting posture, with legs crossed, similar to the position in which Buddha is so often represented. The face was turned towards the north, and the body was meagrely clothed, having only a *langoti*, or scanty loin-cloth. Another piece of cloth, reddish in colour, was cut open in the centre, and the head was put through this opening, so that the cloth rested on the shoulders. It seems strange that in Exod. xxviii. 31, 32 (R.V.) we read of "the robe of the ephod all of blue" which was to "have a hole for the head in the midst thereof." Under the right arm was placed a *jholi* or bag, the string of which went around the shoulder. The right hand, which held a *chapāti*, or cake of unleavened bread, was placed to the mouth. Inside the mouth was placed the *udrāj*, *i.e.*, one of the sacred beads which mendicants wear around the neck. In the mouth was also placed a leaf of the Bael-tree (*Ægle marmelos*), and by the side of the body was a stick, and also a *kamandal*, or water vessel, made of a gourd such as mendicants carry. By the side of

the body was a pair of wooden sandals. The body was surrounded with large quantities of salt, and the earth was then filled in. On the mound over the grave was placed a *Siv*, *i.e.*, a stone, which is connected with Phallic worship, and the fellow caste-men went around the grave seven times sprinkling rice on the *Siv*. Every night a lamp would be burnt near the grave for one year, and water was to be sprinkled on the *Siv* daily.

Burial of Infants.

There is a peculiar custom in connection with the burial of infants which seems to be confined to this part of India. A still-born child, or one who has passed away before the *Chhatti* (the sixth day, the day of purification) is not taken out of the house for burial, but is placed in an earthen vessel (a *gharā*) and is buried in the doorway or in the yard of the house. Some say that this is done in order that the mother may bear another child. Again, a feast is required of the relatives of the deceased only if the body is taken to the burial-ground, and the practice of burying in the house or yard may have started from a desire to avoid the expenses of a feast to caste-fellows. Others say that the souls of the stillborn, or infants, are specially sought after by the *Tonhi*, or witch, and to save the infants from being made a *Mukā deo*, or a dumb spirit, a medium for influencing others, the infant is buried in the house or the yard.[1] This practice, which is known as *Bhandārnā*, is common to

[1] See the "Dictionary of Faiths and Folklore" (Changelings). In the "Gentle Shepherd" Bauldy, describing Mause as a witch, says of her,

"At midnight hours o'er the kirkyard she raves,
And howks unchristened weans out of their graves."

all castes in the country of which I write. The question arises as to whether it has any connection with infanticide. A prominent *Satnāmi* of whom I made inquiries, though he undoubtedly knew of the practice, confessed complete ignorance. This, however, is the only instance of reticence I have noticed, for as a rule the people discuss the practice without reserve, and I do not think it has any connection with the desire to get rid of young children.

The Hereafter.

The practices and sayings in connection with the hereafter are so conflicting that it is impossible to form a clear idea as to exactly how the village people regard the future. That they have the idea of hell as a place of punishment may be gathered from the belief that if salt is spilt the one who does this will in *Patāl*—or the infernal region—have to gather up each grain of salt with his eyelids. Salt is for this reason handed around with great care, and it is considered unlucky to receive it in the palm of the hand; it is therefore invariably received in a cloth or in a vessel. There is a belief that the spirit of the deceased hovers around familiar scenes and places, and on this account whenever it is possible, it is customary to destroy, or to desert, the house in which any one has died. If a house is deserted the custom is to sweep and plaster the place, and then, after lighting a lamp, to leave it in the house and withdraw altogether. After the spirit of the dead has wandered around restlessly for a certain time, it is said that it will again become incarnate, and take either the form of man or of one of the lower animals. The practice known as *boi lagānā* has reference to this belief, for, before burial or

cremation, it is customary to make a mark with soot or with oil on the body of the deceased. When children are born into the families of nearer relatives the birth-marks are closely examined, and if any of these should have the faintest resemblance to the mark made on the deceased, it is believed that he has become reincarnated in the new-born babe.

Transmigration.

The old *Satnāmi Chamār*, named Gobardhan, whom I have already mentioned, often conversed with me regarding the transmigration of souls. He professed to be able to say exactly what form of life his acquaintances had in a previous "birth." He believed himself to have been a *Brāhman*, who for some offence was sent into this world as a *Chamār*. He had done much to accumulate merit, however, and he believed that in the next "birth" he would again appear as a *Brāhman*. He also said to me that he had on his farm several bullocks and buffaloes, which he used for ploughing purposes, and these he believed to be the reincarnated souls of those who had done him some injury in a previous "birth," or who had died owing him money. They were sent now to slave for him, and thus pay their debts, or make good the wrong they had done. This old man once accompanied me when I went to see my horse. As we entered the stable, the horse started. Addressing old Gobardhan I said: "Since you profess to know what form an animal had in the 'previous birth' (literally, *agle janm*), will you tell me what this horse was in the former incarnation?" The man was equal to the occasion, for he immediately replied, "*Sāhib*, your horse was a deer in the last birth; he was a deer, and was shot." "How do you know

that?" I asked. "Did you not notice how he started when we entered?" was the reply, "he started because he is timid in spirit, like a deer; and look here," he continued, pointing to a birth-mark on the flank of the animal, "this mark shows where the deer was shot when it was killed." The belief is wide-spread that the marks of the body are transmitted, and that the next "birth" is affected by the actions of the present life. I was once speaking with a *Hindu* gardener of the possibility of turmeric and garlic being stolen from his garden. "These two vegetables are never stolen," he replied, "for we *Hindus* believe that he who steals turmeric or garlic will appear with six fingers in the next birth, and this deformity is always considered the birth-mark of a thief." If a child dies very soon after birth, the phrase used is "*Bahur gayā.*" This means "It has returned," and the idea is that the life was sent into this world but has returned to the place from whence it came.

CHAPTER VII

Folk Tales and Proverbs

"Let them tell thee tales
Of woeful ages long ago betid."
SHAKESPEARE.

The Little Black-bird.

THERE was once a little black-bird (the *litiā*) who was the proud owner of three *kauries*, or shells. This bird used to come to a king and say, "I have three *kauries*, O king, I have three *kauries*, O king." The king was so much annoyed by the continual chirping of the little bird that he ordered his servants to take the three *kauries* from the bird and to drive it away. But the bird would not leave the king, and so it began to say, "My wealth has made you rich, O king, my wealth has made you rich, O king." The king then ordered that the three *kauries* should be returned to the little black-bird. The bird then took the three *kauries*, and went to the seller of parched gram (a coarse pea), and with the three *kauries* she bought three grains of parched gram. Taking these the bird flew off and sat on a new cart which a carpenter was making, and there she started eating the gram. Having eaten two grains, she was about to eat the third, when it dropped from her

beak and fell into a joint of the new cart, where she could not reach it. In great distress she appealed to the carpenter to take to pieces his cart that she might get at the grain she had lost. "You silly little thing," said the carpenter, "do you suppose I am going to take to pieces my new cart to get at a single grain which you have dropped into the joint of the woodwork? The little black-bird then went to the king, and said to him that she had lost her grain, and asked him to order the carpenter to open his cart that she might get at her grain. "You silly little thing," said the king, "do you suppose I am going to order the carpenter to open his cart that you may get one small grain?" The little black-bird then went to the queen, and begged of her to persuade the king to order the carpenter to open the cart to let her get at the grain. But the queen also said "Get away, you silly little thing." Then the little black-bird went to a deer and said, "Come, O deer, graze in the queen's garden, for she will not persuade the king, and the king will not order the carpenter, and the carpenter will not open the cart, and I cannot get at my grain." But the deer would give no heed to the bird, and called her "You silly little thing." Then said the bird, "I will go to the *lāthi*" (the strong, stout stick). To the *lāthi* she went and said, "Come, stout stick, strike the deer; for the deer will not graze in the queen's garden, and the queen will not persuade the king, and the king will not command the carpenter, and the carpenter will not open his cart, and I cannot get at my grain. But the stick also would give no ear to the cry of the little black-bird, so she went at once to the fire; and she begged the fire to burn the stick, for the stick would not beat the deer, and the deer would not eat the queen's garden, and the queen would

not persuade the king, the king would not command the carpenter, the carpenter would not break up his cart, and she could not get at her grain. But the fire also made light of the little bird's prayer. So she went next to the lake, and implored the lake to quench the fire, for the fire would not burn the stick, and the stick would not strike the deer, and the deer would not destroy the garden, and the queen would not persuade the king, and the king refused to command the carpenter, who also refused to open his cart, so that the bird could not get at her grain. But the lake refused to help the bird. She then went to a place where there were thousands of rats, and to the rats she presented her prayer that they should come and fill the lake with their diggings, for the lake would not quench the fire, &c., &c. But the rats also gave no attention to the wishes of the small black-bird. Then the bird went to a cat, and of the cat she implored that she should attack the rats, for the rats would not fill in the lake, and the lake would not quench the fire, &c., and she could not get at her grain. But the cat also was deaf to the prayers of the small black-bird. Then she went to the elephant, and of the elephant she implored that he would crush the cat, for the cat would not kill the rats, &c., &c., and she could not get at her grain. But the elephant treated her as did all the others. Then she went to an ant, and begged the wee ant to crawl into the elephant's ear, for the elephant would not crush the cat, &c., &c., and she could not get at her grain. But the ant also gave no heed to her prayer. Then at last she came to the crow, the most greedy of all creatures, and of the crow she begged that he should eat the ant. From sheer greed the crow consented to eat the ant ; but the ant, seeing the crow

about to eat it, went to crawl into the ear of the elephant, and the elephant, fearing the harm which the ant could do him, went to crush the cat; but the cat slipped away, and was about to destroy the rats, and they at once began to fill in the lake; and the lake, becoming alarmed, was about to quench the fire, when the fire began to burn the stick, and the stick began to beat the deer, so that the deer was about to destroy the queen's garden, when the queen began to persuade the king, and so the king commanded the carpenter, and the carpenter opened his new cart; and the little blackbird found her grain, and happily taking it up she flew away, and quietly enjoyed her repast, and lived very happily ever after.

The Louse and the Crow.

Once a louse and a crow made a covenant of friendship. The louse said to the crow, "Go, friend, and bring me some fire." So the crow brought his friend, the louse, some fire. Then said the louse, "Now friend, I will broil and eat you." The crow replied, "If I strike you once with my beak you will disappear: how then can you talk of eating me?" But the louse broiled and ate his friend, the crow. Passing on the louse came across a loaf of bread which a man was cooking on the fire. Then said the louse to the loaf of bread, "I will eat you, my friend." But the bread replied that the louse would be scorched in the fire, and how could he eat the bread? But the louse ate the bread also. Passing on the louse met a she-goat. To the goat he said, "I am about to feast on you." The goat replied that if she would trample on the louse he would be reduced to nothing. The louse replied that he had eaten the crow and the loaf of

bread, and he could eat the goat also. And he quickly finished the goat. Passing on the louse met a cow. To the cow he said, "I am about to eat you, O cow." But the cow replied, "If I trample you underfoot you will be reduced to nothing." The louse said, "If I have eaten the crow and the bread and the goat, what then can hinder me from eating you?" So he ate the cow also. Passing on the louse met a buffalo. To the buffalo the louse said, "I will eat you also." But the buffalo replied, "I have but to tread on you and you will be nowhere." Then the louse ate the buffalo also. The louse next met five strong sepoys. To the sepoys the louse said, "I am about to eat you five men." The sepoys replied, "You will lose yourself in the head of but one of us, and here you speak of feasting on us five warriors." But true to his word the louse ate the five sepoys. Next the louse met a wedding procession in which there were one lakh of people. Addressing them, the louse said that he would eat them. The men replied that the louse would be lost in the head of but one man, and how then could he speak of eating a lakh of people? But the louse replied that he had eaten first the crow, then the loaf, then the goat, and the cow, and the buffalo, and the five sepoys, and he would certainly eat the lakh of people in the procession; and he quickly devoured the whole number. Next the louse came upon an elephant, and to the elephant the louse said, "I will eat you in no time." The elephant replied that he could blow away the louse with but one puff of breath from his trunk. The louse then related how he had eaten the crow, the loaf, &c., &c., and accordingly he ate the elephant also. Now the louse, being thirsty, came across a huge tank of water. Said the louse to the tank, "I am about to

drink in all of your water." The tank replied that the louse would be washed away with but one wave from the waters of the tank, and how then could he talk of drinking in the waters of the tank? The louse again proceeded to narrate how he had eaten the crow, the loaf, the goat, &c., &c., and the louse then drank in all the waters of the tank. Now it so happened that some women came as usual to fill the vessels of water at the tank, and to their great astonishment they found that the waters had disappeared. While they were looking around, one of the women, who had but one eye, spied on the bank of the tank a small, shining object, which proved to be the louse. Said the woman, "This surely is the creature which has drunk the waters of our tank." Just then a strong sepoy came along to have a drink at the tank. The women showed him the louse which had taken up all the water. This strong warrior immediately drew his sharp sword and with one stroke he cut in two the greedy louse. Immediately the crow appeared, and the loaf, and the goat, the cow, the buffalo, the five men, the one lakh of people, the elephant also, and the waters of the tank. Each of these went to their respective places, and the women, after thanking the brave sepoy who had befriended them, filled their water-pots as usual and went to their homes.

The Tiger and the Barber.

A barber was at one time going through a jungle, when he met a tiger. He had with him nothing but the implements of his trade, and not knowing how to save his life, he quickly devised the following scheme. Taking out his small looking-glass he boldly went up to the tiger and held up the glass. Addressing this wild

beast, he said, "I have promised the king to slay twelve tigers, and have accepted trust-money for this task. Now I have found only two tigers" (meaning the real tiger and its reflection in the glass); "can you direct me to ten more?" Hearing this the tiger was so alarmed that he quickly disappeared, thinking that the barber was truly a tiger-slayer. Thus by his cunning the barber saved his life.

The Pailā and the Paili.

Once upon a time a *Pailā*, a large grain-measure, had a quarrel with the *Paili*, a small grain-measure, and the *Pailā* beat the *Paili* so that the *Paili* ran away from her husband in a temper. When the *Paili* was on the road-side she met a crow seated in a *nim*-tree. The crow said to the *Paili*, "Where are you going to, O *Paili?*" The *Paili* replied that her husband, the *Pailā*, had beaten her, and she was running away from him. Said the crow, "Well, come and stay with me; do not go away in anger." The *Paili* replied, "What will you give me to eat and what to drink, what to wear and what to spread?" The crow replied, "I will place one wing under you and the other above, and the food left over by others I will bring you to eat." But the *Paili* said she would not stay, and so saying she went on her way. On the side of a tank the *Paili* met a *Bagulā* (a crane or heron), and the *Bagulā* also begged her to remain with him. The *Paili* said to him, "What will you give to eat, what to drink, what to wear, and what to spread?" Said the *Bagulā*, "I will place one wing below you and the other above, and I will feed you with fishes." But the *Paili* would not stay with the *Bagulā*, and went on her way. Next the *Paili* came to a place where a *Rājā* was holding his *Darbār*. Then the *Rājā* asked of her,

"Where are you going to, O *Paili?*" The *Paili* replied, "The *Pailā* beat me, so I am going away in a temper." But the *Rājā* begged of her to remain with him. The *Paili* asked him what she would get to eat and what to drink, what to wear and what to spread. The *Rājā* said, "I will place one cushion below you and one above, and whatsoever you desire you may have to eat." But the *Paili* refused to stay with the *Rājā*. As she went on her way she met a dog coming from the river after having had a bath. The dog said, "Where are you going to, O *Paili?*" and the *Paili* replied that the *Pailā* had beaten her and she was going away from him in a temper. Then the dog also asked the *Paili* to stay with him, and the *Paili* said, "What will you give me to eat and what to drink, what to wear and what to spread?" The dog replied that in the *Rājā's* store there was a quantity of *gur* (raw sugar), and they would eat from that as much as they pleased. Then the *Paili* consented to stay with the dog. And they both lived in the *Rājā's* store-house. One day the *Rājā* sent his daughter to bring *gur* from his store. So the daughter, taking the scales and weights, went to the store to fetch the *gur*. First she threw the scales into the store, and was about to follow herself, but the scales struck the dog on the head, and *Paili* jumped out, saying :—

Lim bharāhbar kauwā chhārev,	On the *nim*-tree I left the crow,
Tāl bharābhar bagulā,	On the tank I left the *bagulā*,
Hai re mor buchā kukur,	Oh now my wounded dog,
Paseri mur kuchā.	The weights have crushed your head.

The Story of Māhādeo and the Jackal.

[I was at one time travelling at night across country accompanied by some villagers when the cry of the jackal was heard in the distance. One of the villagers remarked, "There's Māhādeo's Watchman." On inquiring as to why the jackal was called Māhādeo's watchman, the villager narrated the following story which appears to be very widely known in the Bilaspore district.]

Once upon a time the elephant and the jackal made a covenant of friendship. They agreed to go out together in search of pasture. The elephant told the jackal to mount his back and look around in search of something to eat. The jackal spied a sugar-cane field from the elephant's back, and they both resorted thither to have a feed. The jackal having a small stomach was soon satisfied; so he said to the elephant, "Friend, I am thirsty, let us go in search of water." The elephant replied, that his stomach being large, he had only begun his meal, but he told the jackal to again mount his back and look round if he saw cranes flying, for where the cranes went there would surely be water. The jackal replied, "Friend, I can see no cranes and I am dying of thirst. I must have a drink." Then said the elephant, "In my stomach there is always water enough to satisfy you: if you enter my stomach you may drink as much as you please, but first promise me one thing—promise me that you will not look upwards while you are inside of me." The jackal promised faithfully to do as he was told, to have his drink inside the elephant and to come out without looking upwards. The elephant then allowed his friend, the jackal, to enter his stomach by his mouth, and the jackal quenched his thirst. Before coming out, however, he thought, "Why should the elephant tell me not to look upwards?" He was so overcome with

curiosity that he looked up to see what was above him. There he saw the elephant's liver and heart and other organs all covered with blood and very tasty in appearance for a jackal. He then thought to himself, "Here is water and here is food for many days, why should I leave so good a place and go wandering over the country in search of my food?" So the jackal took up his abode inside the elephant and ate and drank every day as much as it pleased him. In time the elephant sickened and died, for the jackal was daily eating away his inside. When the elephant died the jackal was entrapped in his carcass, which dried and shrank in around him. The jackal then found himself in a sad plight, and loudly he cried for some one to help him to get out. Now it so happened that Māhādeo and his wife, Pārbati, descended from heaven to walk on the earth, and in their wandering they came near to the carcass of the elephant in which the jackal was entrapped. On hearing the cries inside the elephant, Māhādeo drew near and asked who it was that was making a noise inside. The jackal replied, "Who are you that question me?" Māhādeo then said, "I am the great god Māhādeo, but who are you?" The jackal replied that he was Sahadeo, the father of Māhādeo. The jackal then said to Māhādeo, "If you are really and truly the great god Māhādeo, now you will show your power by causing a heavy shower of rain." Māhādeo then caused it to rain in torrents, and the rain fell as it never had fallen before. Because of the damp and the moisture the hide of the elephant began to swell, and thus the jackal was able to make his escape. Māhādeo then took an oath that he would avenge himself of the jackal for this act of deception.

After some time Māhādeo learned the place where

the jackal used to go to the river to drink, and he hid himself in the water that he might lay hold of him when he came for his daily drink. When the jackal was drinking at the stream then Māhādeo laid hold of one of his legs and drew him into the river and tried to drown him, but the jackal cried aloud to Māhādeo that he had not laid hold of his leg but that he was holding the root of a tree. Māhādeo then let go the jackal's leg and the jackal made his escape, and so he deceived Māhādeo the second time.

Again Māhādeo determined to seize the jackal, and this time he feigned himself dead and lay like a corpse where the jackal would be sure to see him. The jackal came near him, but first he wished to make sure that he was dead. So he said aloud that a corpse recently dead passes flatus, but this corpse had passed no flatus. Māhādeo, hearing this, allowed gas to escape, and the jackal ran off saying, "Oh, you are no corpse, and you will not deceive me."

After a time Māhādeo hit upon another device of catching the jackal. He made a large figure like that of a woman, all of beeswax. In the hands of this figure he placed a basket of sweets such as children like, and inside the figure of wax he placed a weaver's spinning wheel, so that the arms of the figure might work back and forth as controlled by Māhādeo at a distance. When the jackal came near he thought the figure of wax was an old woman with a basket of sweets in her hands. So the jackal came nearer still, and tried to steal the sweets from the woman, but when he came within striking distance the figure struck him with one arm and then with the other, so that the jackal was covered with wax and stuck to the figure ; then Māhādeo came near and laid

hands on the jackal and made him his prisoner. The jackal was kept bound in Māhādeo's yard, and every morning and evening Māhādeo would go to the jackal and give him a sound thrashing. This he did for many days, and the jackal in consequence became greatly swollen in appearance. One day a strange jackal came into Māhādeo's yard, and seeing the bound jackal so fleshy in appearance, he asked what he was given to eat that he should be so fat. The jackal who was bound began to praise Māhādeo and his treatment of him. He did this to such an extent that the strange jackal became desirous of trying Māhādeo's hospitality. Then the imprisoned jackal offered to exchange places with the stranger. With his help the one jackal was set free and the new one was bound in his place. In the morning Māhādeo came as usual to beat the jackal he had bound. The strange jackal, instead of getting good food as he expected, was given a severe beating. He thought he would wait till evening, and then he would get his meal. But when evening came Māhādeo again approached him with a stick, and was about to beat him when he asked Māhādeo about the good food and the good treatment of which the other jackal had told him. Then only did Māhādeo know that the jackal which had deceived him so often had deceived him once again. So he gave the strange jackal his freedom, and told him, "You go now and be my *pāhārādār* or watchman, and I must hear your voice in the night keeping watch for me." From that time forth the jackal has been Māhādeo's watchman.

The Story of Īr, Bīr, Dau and I.

[This child's play-song was taken down *verbatim* from the lips of a girl twelve years of age, who had learned it from an old man, a beggar, who would make her repeat this song in order to help them in begging as they went from village to village together.]

1. Īr kahis chal bāṇs kāte, Bīr kahis chal bāṇs kāte, Dau kahis chal bāṇs kāte, hamuṇ kahen chal bāṇs kāte.

Īr said come let's cut bamboos, Bīr said come let's cut bamboos, Dau said come let's cut bamboos, I said come let's cut bamboos.

2. Īr kātis īr bāṇs, Bīr kātis bīr bāṇs, Dau kātis tīn bāṇs, ham kāten kanai.

Īr cut one bamboo, Bīr cut two bamboos, Dau cut three bamboos, I cut small bamboo.

3. Īr kahis chal gulel banāi, Bīr kahis chal gulel banāi, Dau kahis chal gulel banāi, hamuṇ kahen chal gulel banāi.

Īr said come make a gulel (pellet bow), Bīr said come make a gulel, Dau said come make a gulel, I said come make a gulel.

4. Īr banāis īr gulel, Bīr banāis bīr gulel, Dau banāis tīn gulel, ham banāin guleliā.

Īr made one gulel, Bīr made two gulels, Dau made three gulels, I made a small gulel.

5. Īr kahis chal chirāi māre, Bīr kahis chal chirāi māre, Dau kahis chal chirāi māre, hamuṇ kahen chal chirāi māre.

Īr said come kill a bird, Bīr said come kill a bird, Dau said come kill a bird, I said come kill a bird.

6. Īr māris īr chirāi, Bīr māris bīr chirāi, Dau māris tīn chirāi, Ham māren litiā.

Īr killed one bird, Bīr killed two birds, Dau killed three birds, I killed a litiā (a small black bird).

7. Īr kahis chal chhenā bine, Bīr kahis chal chenā bine, Dau kahis chal chhenā bine, hamuṇ kahen chal chhenā bine.

Īr said come gather fuel (lit. cow-dung cake), Bīr said come gather fuel, Dau said come gather fuel, I said come gather fuel.

8. Īr binis īr chhenā, Bīr binin bīr chennā, Dau binis tīn chhenā, ham binin kaṇdoṇ.

Īr gathered one fuel-cake, Bīr gathered two fuel-cakes, Dau gathered three fuel-cakes, I gathered a small cake.

9. Īr kahis chal chirāi bhuṇje, Bīr kahis chal chirāi bhuṇje, Dau kahis chal chirāi bhuṇje, hamuṇ kahen chal chirāi bhuṇje.

Īr said come broil the bird, Bīr said come broil the bird, Dau said come broil the bird, I said come broil the bird.

10. Īr bhuṇjis īr chirāi, Dau bhuṇjis bīr chirāi, Dau bhuṇjis tīn chirāi, ham bhuṇjin litiā. (Jarke athkā baṛ bāchis.)

Īr broiled one bird, Bīr broiled two birds, Dau broiled three birds, I broiled a small bird: it was burnt and so much remained (here a gesture is made with the finger to indicate a small quantity).

11. Īr kahis chal piḍhwā lāye, Bīr kahis chal piḍhwā lāye, Dau kahis chal piḍhwā lāye, hamuṇ kahen chal piḍhwā lāye.

Īr said come fetch a stool, Bīr said come fetch a stool, Dau said come fetch a stool, I said come fetch a stool.

12. Īr lānis īr piḍhwā, Bīr lānis bīr piḍhwā, Dau lānis tīn piḍhwā, ham baite waisnech.

Īr he brought one stool, Bīr he brought two stools, Dau he brought three stools, I sat just so.

13. Īr kahis chal chirāi khāi, Bīr kahis chal chirāi

khāi, Dau kahis chal chirāi khāi, hamuṇ kahin chal chirāi khāi.

Īr said come eat the bird, Bīr said come eat the bird, Dau said come eat the bird, I said come eat the birdie.

14. Īr khāis īr chirāi, Bīr khāis bīr chirāi, Dau khāis tīn chirāi, ham khāyen litiā.

Īr ate one bird, Bīr ate two birds, Dau ate three birds, I ate the litiā.

15. Īr kahis chal ghoṛā lihe, Bīr kahis chal ghoṛā lihe, Dau kahis chal ghoṛ lihe, hamuṇ kahen chal ghoṛā lihe.

Īr said come buy a horse, Bīr said come buy a horse, Dau said come buy a horse, I said come buy a horse.

16. Īr leis īr ghoṛā, Bīr leis bīr ghoṛā, Dau leis tīn ghoṛā, ham leyan gadahī.

Īr he bought one horse, Bīr he bought two horses, Dau he bought three horses, I bought a she-ass.

17. Īr kahis chal ghoṛā pahatāi, Bīr kahis chal ghoṛā pahatāi, Dau kahis chal ghoṛā pahatāi, hamuṇ kahen chal gadahi pahatāi.

Īr said come race my horse, Bīr said come race my horse, Dau said come race my horse, I said come race my ass.

18. Īr pahatāis īr ghoṛā, Bīr pahatāis bīr ghoṛā, Dau pahatāis tīn ghoṛā ham pahatāin gadahī.

Īr galloped one horse, Bīr galloped two horses, Dau galloped three horses, I galloped the ass.

19. Īr kahis chal pāni piyae, Bīr kahis chal pāni piyae, Dau kahis chal pāni piyae, hamuṇ, kahen chal pāni piyae.

Īr said come now to water, Bīr said come now to water, Dau said come now to water, I said come now to water.

20. Īr gais īr dabarī, Bīr gais bīr dabarī, Dau gais tīn dabarī, ham gayen gadahī dabarī. Temā, hamār gadahī satakage.

Īr went to one pond, Bīr went to another (*lit.* two) pond, Dau went to a third pond, I went to ass-pond—in which my ass became entangled.

21. Īr ke ghoṛā hoṇ, hoṇ, hoṇ, hoṇ, Bīr ke ghoṛā hoṇ, hoṇ, hoṇ, hoṇ, Dau ke ghoṛā hoṇ, hoṇ, hoṇ, hoṇ, hamār gadahī chīpoṇ, chīpoṇ.

Īr's horse cried hoṇ, hoṇ, hoṇ, hoṇ; Bīr's horse cried hoṇ, hoṇ, hoṇ, hoṇ; Dau's horse cried hoṇ, hoṇ, hoṇ, hoṇ; my ass cried chīpoṇ, chīpoṇ.

22. Īr kahis chal āmā khāye, Bīr kahis chal āmā khāye, Dau kahis chal āmā khāye, hamuṇ kahēn chal āmā khāye.

Īr said come let's eat mangoes, Bīr said come let's eat mangoes, Dau said come let's eat mangoes, I said come let's eat mangoes.

23. Īr khāis īr āmā, Bīr khāis bīr āmā, Dau khāis tīn āmā, ham khāyen kochalaiyā, paḥuchage gosaiyā.

Īr ate one mango, Bīr ate two mangoes, Dau ate three mangoes, I ate small mango, then came the gardener.

24. Īr lā māris īr lāthī, Bīr lā māris bīr lāthī, Dau lā māris tīn lāthī, ham gayen bochakaiyā.

Īr was beaten one stripe, Bīr was beaten two stripes, Dau was beaten three stripes, I came off scot-free.

The Deer and the Jackal.

Once upon a time a deer and a jackal went to a well to drink. The jackal said to the deer, "Friend, I will first go down and have a drink and afterwards you may drink also." So the deer held the jackal by the tail while he hung over in the well and quenched his thirst. When it was the deer's turn to drink, the jackal held him by the tail, and while he leaned over to drink the jackal pushed him over into the water. Close by

there were some men harvesting peas, so the jackal called aloud to them that there was a deer fallen in the well, and the men all hastened to look into the well. On seeing the deer in the well the men set to and hauled out the dead body of the deer. They then took it away to a short distance and began to cut it to pieces. Just then the jackal came on the scene and said to the men: "Friends, will you not give me some of the meat also?" But the men replied that they had taken out the deer with great difficulty, and they refused to give the jackal a portion of the flesh of the deer. The jackal repeatedly begged of them for a portion, but the men positively refused to share the meat with the jackal. Then said the jackal to the men, "If you cannot give me meat, you can at least oblige me with a few sparks of fire." The men then handed him the fire. The jackal, taking the fire, set ablaze the stacks of peas which the men had been harvesting. The men, in great alarm, left the deer which they were dividing between themselves and came to save their burning stacks of peas. The jackal then helped himself to as much of the deer as he pleased, and he ran away laughing at the stupidity of the foolish men who refused to share with him the flesh of the deer.

Proverbs.

1. *Ullā pultā bhau sansārā tab nau ke mur murai lohārā.*—When the world is turned upside down the blacksmith will shave the barber.

2. *Nāche la āwai nahin marwā lā doshi.*—He who cannot dance blames the roof (or the canopy made at weddings).

3. *Bhaisā ke singh bhaisā lā garu.*—The buffalo alone knows the weight of its horns.

4. *Khori mori tang tori, khori ke laikā pāch kori.*—The lame, the maimed, the broken-legged, the poor have children five-score.

5. *Bhalwā ke deh mā rowā kā dukāl.*—On the body of a bear a famine of wool.

6. *Teli ke tel rahte to pāhar nahin chupre.*—The oilman has oil in abundance, but he does not grease the mountains.

7. *Khāye ke dari ghat ghet gae, pise ke dari pachite lukai.*—At the time of eating all to the front, at the time of grinding hidden away.

8. *Bakrā kā jiv chhuti khawaiyā lā anonā.*—The goat has given his life, and still the dish is considered insipid.

9. *Jānwar mā kohilā, pakshi mā kauwā manukh mā nan.*—Amongst beasts the jackal, amongst birds the crow, amongst men the barber (these three are the most cunning).

10. *Wakt pare bākā to gadhe lā kahe kakā.*—In times of necessity a man will call an ass his uncle.

11. *Gant mā nahin kauri, nāk chhede lā douri.*—Not a *kauri* (shell) at her waist, and she runs to have her nose pierced (for a nose-ring).

12. *San ko suri, chor ko puri.*—For a good man the gallows, for a thief a feast.

13. *Dāl na pisān, khatai bine udās.*—He has neither pulse nor flour (for a meal), and yet he regrets the absence of pickles.

14. *Chatur lā kekrā nahin chābai.*—The crab cannot bite the prudent.

15. *Bhukh na mānai jhutthā bhāt, piā na mānia dhobi ghāt, nindh na mānai marghat khāt, jawāni na mānai jāt kujāt.*—Hunger regards not unclean food, Thirst minds not the watering-place, Sleep objects not to a bier for a bed, and Youth (passion) regards not caste or out-caste.

CHAPTER VIII

Snakelore, Relics, and Fossils

"I am so fraught with curious business that I leave out ceremony."
SHAKESPEARE.

THE snake-charmers of the district are called *Gouriyās.* They appear to be small in number, reside in a few villages of this district, engage in agriculture during the rains, and in the dry months wander away to great distances with their curious pets, which they exhibit, and thus make a precarious living. I have called them snake-charmers, but they do not charm with music, for I have yet to see the *Gouriyā* who uses the gourd flute so often seen in other parts of India. They wear the peculiarly twisted narrow turban which is characteristic of the Indian snake-charmer. They have attached to their turbans a few claws of bears or tigers and the talons of hawks or large birds of some kind. The snakes usually carried around are the *Python molurus* and two varieties of the *cobrā*, one with the spectacles and the other without them. The *cobrā* with the mark on the head is called the *Domi;* without this mark it is called the *Gouhā.* They are believed to be quite distinct snakes. I learned, in conversation with the men, that they make an agreement with the snake

when it is first captured as to how long it will be kept in captivity. Some vow to keep it for six months, others for a year and a half. When the time is up the snake is given its freedom and another is captured. It would be considered a very great misfortune if a snake should die in captivity. On questioning a man as to how the *cobrā* came to have the mark on its head, I was told that when *Bhagwān*, the deity, went into *Patāl* (the nether region) he placed his foot on the *Nāg*, or snake, and it is the footprint of *Bhagwān* that is seen on the snake to-day. "It shall bruise thy head," as we read in Gen. iii. 15. The *Python molurus* is considered the most *dharmi* (righteous) of all snakes. The reason is that it will never go out of its way to seek for its prey; it lies quietly till the victim happens to come into its immediate vicinity, and then it will lay hold of it.

The *Ptyas mucosus* is locally known as the *Āshariyā*, from the month *Āshār*, corresponding with June–July. It is so called from the popular belief that it is poisonous only in *Āshār*. The following interesting story is told concerning this snake. At one time the *Āshariyā* was the only poisonous snake in existence. It found a *Rāut* (a herdsman) lying on the side of a field, where he had fallen asleep while tending his cattle. Near the head of the herdsman lay his bamboo flute, which he often played to while away the time while watching his cattle. Now the *Āshariyā* had often heard the sound of the flute, and was annoyed at hearing the music. Finding the *Rāut* asleep, he determined to silence him for ever. He approached the head of the sleeping man and struck him in the forehead, saying, "Now you are silenced, and I will never again be troubled with your music." When the *Āshariyā* had gone away, to his great astonishment he

again heard the sound of the herdsman's flute just as before. The flute lay at the head of the dead body in such a position that the wind blowing through it caused it to make music just as when played on by the owner. The *Āshariyā* was much enraged at the thought of his poison not having silenced the *Rāut*. He determined to distribute his poison to others, and to increase the possibility of the man being killed by his poison. He therefore gave an invitation to all manner of reptiles to come to a feast which he had prepared. All the reptiles came in great numbers. While distributing food to the guests the *Āshariyā* mixed with the food a good portion of his own deadly poison, which up to that time he alone possessed. The *cobrā* and other poisonous snakes, the scorpions and all other stinging insects, received as much poison as was contained in the food of which they partook. Hence the various degrees in the poison of snakes and insects. The *Āshariyā*, in consequence, had only a little poison left, and so it is poisonous only in the month of *Āshār*. It is said that traders in cattle, and those who have to do with the breaking-in of cattle, keep a piece of the tail of the *Āshariyā* by them. If the tail of this snake is pushed up the nostril of a refractory animal (a bullock or a buffalo) the animal will immediately become manageable and submissive.

There is still another snake which holds an important place in the folklore of the district. This is locally known as the "*Muṛaṛi sāp*, and I cannot supply the scientific name, but it belongs to the family of earth-snakes which burrow underground and come to the surface only occasionally. It is not much more than eight inches in length, thick, and of much the same dimension from end to end. On account of the similar

appearance of head and tail it is sometimes said to have two heads. For six months it goes one way and for six months the other. On being touched this snake has a way of curling around in a circular form. This may account for the name (*muṛnā* means to twist), and it certainly accounts for the popular belief that it is the greatest enemy of the larger snakes, for it will twist itself around them till they are strangled. But the most common belief with regard to the *Muṛaṛi* is that it will attach itself to a woman's breast and draw away her milk while she sleeps. The snake, it is said, will place its tail in the child's mouth, and thus soothe the child while drawing away the milk for its own nourishment, hence women hold this snake in special abhorrence. While speaking with a man concerning the *Muṛaṛi* he told me that only recently he had killed this snake in the house of a neighbour, and he had found a quantity of milk in its maw. On my expressing my doubt, he went on to explain that his neighbour's wife had a child which had lost flesh for some time past. The reason given was that the snake was taking the woman's milk while the child was starving. Now that the snake had been destroyed the child was gaining flesh and improving in health. If a *Muṛaṛi* is found in the fields it is taken up on a stick and thrown towards the sun. This is called *suraj dekhānā* (To be shown the sun). It is thrown high up in the air, and is killed as a result of the fall. The snake-charmers also informed me that at the *Hariyāli* festival it is their practice to go out in the fields and burn *hom* (sacrifice) at the roots of the trees or herbs which are employed as antidotes to snake-poison. It is at this festival also that they lay in a stock of antidotal herbs for use during the coming year.

The snake-charmers also informed me that many years ago a huge snake, called the *Ahirāj*, was found in the Raipore district, and it had embedded in its forehead a precious stone of immense size. Shortly after hearing this from the snake-men, I was surprised to find the following words in Shakespeare's "As you like it":—

> "Which, like the toad, ugly and venomous,
> Wears yet a precious jewel in his forehead."

Much of the interest attaching to folklore is surely due to the manner in which some apparently trivial item suddenly assumes importance by corroboration from a most unexpected quarter.

Stone Implements.

While conducting a class of young men, I happened to have on my table a copy of the *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, with illustrations of stone implements. One of the men remarked, "When I was a boy my father had a stone like that one," and he pointed out one in the illustrations. He said his father called it a "*sarag patar*"—heaven or sky stone. I immediately saw the importance of this name, and was positive the young man referred to a stone implement, for in widely separated countries the belief prevails that the stone implements are thunderbolts, and here was the name "heaven stone" used by the people in Mungeli. Next morning I made further inquiries, and my *syce* offered to get me a "*sarag patar*" which was owned by one of his uncles. In due time the uncle turned up, bringing with him a bored stone, and I saw at once that it was undoubtedly a stone implement of former days. The only use for which this stone was now employed was as a remedy for *galwa*, swollen glands round the neck.

The man who owned the stone said it had come down from father to son in his family, for many generations. Together with this stone the man brought me a piece of stag's horn, which he said had always been with the stone. I now very much regret that I took no interest in the stag's horn and purchased only the bored stone. It did not occur to me that there was any possible connection between the stone and the stag's horn. Some months later I was reading Sir Daniel Wilson's book on "Left-handedness." On page 49 he shows that in all probability the makers of flint arrows, &c., employed bones or horns, for these were the only implements at their service. The fact that a stone and a stag's horn were handed down for generations together would indicate some close connection between the two; and it seems probable that the stag's horn was the implement with which the stone was bored. After several years of search I have succeeded in getting together twenty-two stones. Some of these have been badly rubbed when they were used medicinally, but we are able to judge of their original shape and form. One or two of the stones are beautifully smooth inside where bored—"as smooth as glass," a friend remarked. One stone has undoubtedly been arrested in the process of manufacture. The outward form is complete, and it has not been rubbed in any way for medicinal purposes. The hole in the centre, however, is only half bored. The hole was evidently made by striking in some sharp-pointed implement. It certainly does not show signs of the rotatory action of a horn or bone implement. One or two of the stones in my collection were said to have been found in fields near the site of an old village. Others have been heirlooms in families for many generations. One man told me he owned a "heaven stone,"

but his house was washed away in a flood and the stone disappeared. The people are very reluctant to make known the fact that they own the stones; and they seem very reluctant to part with them.

Fossil Bones.

During the digging of a well in the grounds of the Mission Hospital, Mungeli, at a depth of about twenty-eight feet from the surface the coolies found pieces of bone embedded in the sand. On my asking to be shown these "finds," the coolies told me, in a casual way, that they resembled the jaw-bone and teeth of an ox, and that they had broken the bones to pieces, because they were heavy and seemed different to anything they had seen. With that careless destructiveness which characterises the childhood of individuals, as well as peoples, these men had broken to pieces that which any one of intelligence would realize at once to be of great value. The next day, however, they found two more pieces, and these they brought to me, and they were forwarded to the Director of the Geological Survey of India. The following is the report that was made concerning them. "They are the Metacarpals and Radius of an Ox, of which the species is indeterminable. They appear, however, to be different from the corresponding bones of recent species, and the peculiar state of mineralisation which they have undergone is so similar to that of bones of Pleistocene Age obtained from the Narbada and from the Ganges alluvium, that there is little doubt that they must be considered as Pleistocene, and therefore contemporaneous with the Narbada alluvial deposits. The fact of such deposits existing in the alluvial basin of the Mahanadi is interesting, as it seems to show that

these Pleistocene river deposits are more wide-spread than was originally suspected. As skulls and teeth are by far the most valuable portion of the animal for identification purposes, it might add considerably to the information we could give if we were to receive them." Alas! for the purpose of identification, the most valuable portion of the animal had been destroyed by those vandal coolies in their ignorance and childish curiosity.

CHAPTER IX

Miscellaneous Items

"*Follow me: I'll tell you strange things.*"—SHAKESPEARE.

Maternal Uncles.

IT is believed that if a maternal uncle should attempt to cross a river in the same ferry with his nephew the boat will most certainly go down. During a storm if they happen to be in the same house, the place will be destroyed by a thunderbolt. A nephew will not touch his uncle's head nor his shoes, nor will he eat food which has been left over by him. The uncle will not strike or beat his sister's son, and if he should stumble against him by accident, he will ask his pardon. I knew a man afflicted with palsy, and this affliction was attributed to his having beaten his nephew.

Aversion to Killing a Cat.

It is said that he who kills a cat will be responsible for all the sins committed by that animal, and since these are numerous, because of the many lives of birds and rats destroyed by the offending cat, the people have a strong aversion to killing that animal.

Owls.

These birds are known as the priests of the witches "*Tonhi kā guru.*" They are considered extremely unlucky, and are associated with misfortune and death. I was once in the neighbourhood of an old *banian*-tree when a young man, herding cattle, asked me to shoot at an owl which lodged in the branches of the tree. I asked why he wished me to kill the bird, and he replied that the owl would call a man by name at night and presently he would sicken and die. It is also considered unwise to call aloud the name of any one at night; the owl will hear the name called and will take to calling that name. A clod of earth or a stone is never thrown at this bird, for it is believed that it will take up the clod or the stone and throw it into water, and as the earth or the stone dissolves in the water the person who threw the missile will sicken and die.

Whirlwinds.

These phenomena are believed to be caused by *bhuts*, or evil spirits. I have also heard them described as a "knot in the wind." Truly has Tylor said "What is poetry to us was philosophy to early man."

The Horned Kettle-drum.

Perhaps the most striking musical instrument used in the Bilaspore district is the *Nishān*, or the horned kettle-drum, which is often seen in marriage processions. It has two long deer horns, attached on either side, and the kettle-drum, which is of the usual shape, hangs from the waist in front of the drummer. Amongst the *Nāgās* there is a drum used which is made of human skulls. Possibly the horned kettle-drum is a survival of

the time when these instruments were made by stretching skins over the skulls of deer with the horns intact. The original skull may have been replaced by the more durable metallic portion, while the "law of copy" has preserved the horns as ornamental. At times the horns are replaced by long pieces of curved iron, and it is quite possible that in the future the iron projections will entirely take the place of the horns.

Taboo as to Days and Months.

There are certain days on which the *Hindus* will not shave themselves. Others observe not the days but the dates. In the month of *Jeth* (May–June) it is against the custom of the people to perform the marriage ceremony of a first-born son, the *Jeth Putr.* A pundit told me the restriction applies only to the marriage of a first-born son with a first-born daughter, but the common people, he said, have narrowed down the restriction and make it apply to every first-born son, whether married to a first-born daughter or any other. This self-imposed restriction brings to mind the restriction placed on themselves by the Jews, for they were forbidden by the law to give more than forty stripes, but desiring to stop short of the full number, in order not to exceed it, they made it a practice to give "forty stripes save one."

The Gourd,

or calabash, is used in many different ways. Frequently it is seen as part of the simple fiddle or other stringed instrument. It is also in use as a water-vessel. Some are large and measure a foot in diameter; others are small and may be tied to the waist on a long journey.

Gourds are also used as floats in the flooded streams. There is sometimes seen a gourd rattle, small in size and filled with seeds or pebbles; this is shaken in the hand in certain exorcising rites. Tylor, in his "Primitive Culture," more than once refers to the gourd rattle used in Africa for divining and exorcising purposes.

Respect for Dead Cattle.

Passing on the outskirts of a village one will sometimes see the carcass of a cow or other domestic animal lying at a distance awaiting removal by the leather workers. The beast of burden, or whatever the animal may be, will have placed on it a few clods of earth. On inquiring why the clods were placed there, villagers will tell you that the placing of the earth on the carcass is supposed to take the place of a formal burial, and every farmer considers it his bounden duty to pay this last token of respect to the animal which has done him service.

Saluting at Lamp-light.

Amongst the village people it is customary for the menials and subordinates to salute a superior when the lamp is first lighted at dusk. Some will also turn to the lamp itself and do obeisance. Whether this practice is a survival of an early form of fire worship, or whether it merely indicates that a new period of time has been ushered in by the lighting of the lamp, I am not prepared to say.

The Spindle and the Panchāyat.

When a *panchāyat*, or meeting of the leading men in a village, is in progress it is considered unwise to have

any one present who is twirling a spindle. It is said that as the spindle keeps revolving, so will the discussion move in a circle and fail to come to a decided issue.

Vermin from the Clouds.

There is a very prevalent belief that worms, frogs, and snakes drop from the clouds. After cloudy weather, when insects appear on certain vegetables, it is said that they have dropped from the clouds. Strange as this idea may seem to us, we have a phrase in English which would appear still more strange to the villager should he hear it translated, for do we not sometimes say that "it is raining cats and dogs"?

Tattooing.

This is done only by the *Gond* women, who travel through the district during harvest time. Their work is not as elaborate as may be seen in other parts of India, in fact, it is specially meagre, the most common figures being two deer facing each other and also the figure of a chain or part of a chain. There is a firm belief that if a woman is not tattooed in this world she will be marked in the next with a *sābar*, or crowbar, by the gods. A woman will never ask her husband to pay for any tattooing she may have done; rather than ask him for money for this purpose she will seek the help of a friend.

Sworn Friendships.

These are known by various names, which are usually connected with the object employed in sealing the friendship. One of the most common names is *Māhāprāsād*, meaning the "great feast or food." It is

supposed to be formed by the covenanting parties partaking together of some of the food cooked and sold at Jagganāth (the Shrine), and brought home by returning pilgrims. As a matter of fact *Māhāprāsād* now means any one who has sworn to be a life-long friend. These friendships are also formed with the use of Ganges water brought home by pilgrims. In this case the friendship is known as *Gangājal.*

Then, again, any flower may be used, and the friendship would be termed merely *phul* (flower). This is usually the case amongst women. Each party places a flower in the ear of the other and the friendship is formed. If some particular flower is used, that flower gives the name to the friendship. In all these bonds of friendship it is incumbent on the promising parties to refrain from taking one another's names, and they call each other *Māhāprāsād*, *Gangājal*, *Dounā* (*Artemisia vulgaris*, or Indian wormwood), or merely *Phul.* It is astonishing how very binding they consider these friendships. After an acquaintance with the people of sixteen years I can recall only one instance in which such a friendship was broken. Like David and Jonathan, the parties stand by each other, they are bound together for better or for worse, &c., &c. It has been hinted to me that these friendships sometimes result in a community of possessions extending even to a community of wives. In this connection it is interesting to note what is done when one of the friends happens, by forgetfulness or necessity, to take the other's name. He will go to his friend and say, "*Tor douki mor douki, gendā gajlā phul.*" These words may have two meanings, and have been interpreted both ways. They may mean, "Your wife and my wife are a garland of marigold flowers"; or they may mean,

"Your wife is my wife, a garland of marigold flowers." By repeating this couplet to his friend, it is supposed the offending one makes propitiation for his offence.

Concerning Witches, Fairies, &c.

(1) There is a belief that witches sometimes have an insatiable desire for human blood, and they can suck blood from the navel of a child without any one knowing it. As a result the child becomes emaciated and dies. There was once a *Telin* witch who was possessed with this desire for blood; being unable to suck the blood from the navel of any other child, she was compelled to draw blood from her own infant. If an adult, also, should suddenly become emaciated and lose flesh, it is said that a witch has sent down a long tongue or tube from the roof of his house when he was asleep and has drawn blood from his navel. In order to regain strength it is necessary to eat a small kind of fish found in the rivers, and also a certain kind of rice. (2) If a child is believed to be possessed by an elf, it is customary for the parents to take a bangle and a tassel worn at the end of a braid of hair by women, and to tie these articles to a twig of the *Baer*-tree (*Jujuba vulgaris*). The *Baer*-tree is supposed to be the special residence of witches, or elfs, or other invisible beings. (3) According to Bates's "Hindi Dictionary," the word *Pret* has several meanings—"a spirit of the dead, a goblin spirit, evil sprite, fiend," &c. In this district it is commonly used to mean an elf or fairy, not necessarily a being with evil influences. *Pretins* are said to assume the form of women and frequent the bazaars. By their superhuman powers they can take away articles from the stalls of tradesmen without being

detected. A woman with a crooked nose is suspected of being a *Pretin.*

The story is told of a *Rāut* (milk-man) who was returning from a bazaar when he saw a *Pretin*, most beautiful to look upon, fomenting her child under a *Baer*-tree. He persuaded her to go to his house, but he hid her *sāri*, or garment, in a hollow bamboo. The *Pretin* lived happily with the *Rāut* and they had three sons. At the marriage of the eldest son the neighbours asked the mother to dance and amuse them. She refused to do this unless she was given her own *sāri*, which the *Rāut* had hidden. Persuaded by his guests, the man at last produced the hidden *sāri* from the hollow bamboo. Scarcely had the woman put it on when she became invisible and disappeared, never to return. It is said that the descendants of the three sons of this *Pretin* are still in this district, but no one has ventured to inform me just where they may be found. Students of folklore will recognise in this story the wide-spread belief that the influence of fairies, giants, &c., lies in some special object. (4) It is believed that some have the power of placing a *Pretin* in a flute or fiddle, and in this case the instrument will make music of its own accord without human assistance.

A Love Potion called Hāthājori.

The *Gond* women who go around the Tehsil in the winter months tattooing and selling roots with medicinal properties also have a herb known as *hāthājori*, which may be roughly translated *hands joined.* I have seen this, and it certainly resembles two hands clasped together. This is said to be a *mohini*, and is given

by a suitor to a woman whose affections he may wish to win. Dr. Watts, in his "Economic Products of India," mentions a vegetable growth of this name, and he calls it "Eagle's claw" (see his Dictionary, M. 208). He makes no reference to its being a love potion, and maybe he describes an entirely different herb to that which is sold by the *Gond* women. I make mention of the *hāthājori* here because of its connection with the following passage in "The Sacred Tree" (a work by Mrs. J. H. Philpot), p. 106: "In the valley of Lanzo, Piedmont, lovers in doubt whether to marry consult the oracle in the form of a herb called *concordia*, the root of which is shaped like two hands each with its five fingers."

A Primitive Form of Lamp Light.

The *Croton tiglium* is very commonly found throughout the district. It is used as a border plant for gardens and groves. The seeds of this shrub form a drastic purgative, and are used for this purpose by the people. But there is still another use made of the seeds, for they are strung together in long rows by children; the lowest is set on fire, and the seeds then burn in succession very slowly, at the same time giving out quite a deal of light. This play amongst the children may possibly be the remains of a general practice of lighting the houses with the seeds of the croton strung together.

CHAPTER X

The New Religion

"Watchman, what of the night?
Watchman, what of the night?
The Watchman said, 'The morning cometh.'"
ISAIAH xxi. 11.

FOR many centuries the *Hindu* and Mahomedan systems of worship have had their adherents in the country of which I write. At the close of each day, mingling with the temple bells, there have been heard the plaintive tones of the *Musalmān* calling worshippers to the place of prayer, and reminding them that God is one and Mahomed is His prophet. In the humblest home in every village the names of Rām and Khrishna have been familiar sounds, and they had often heard of the Prophet of Arabia. For all they knew to the contrary, these two were the only religions in the world, for, apart from them, they had not heard of any other. If questioned as to the name of Jesus, they would undoubtedly have answered, "Shri[1] Rām we know, and Shri Khrishna we know, and we have often heard of Hazrat[2] Mahomed. But

[1] Lustrous. [2] Worshipful, or His Highness.

who is this Jesus? His name we have never heard; of His teachings we are totally ignorant."

Strange Teachers.

One bright morning, about the year 1886, the villagers awoke to find the tent of the white man pitched in the shade of the mango grove on the outskirts of the town of Mungeli. At first the white men were taken for officers of the Government, and the village folk deemed it expedient to keep at a respectful distance. Then the rumour went around that the strangers were man and wife, for one of them was clean-shaven, and in the distance he was mistaken for a lady. The Mahomedan invariably keeps a beard, while the *Hindu* will never shave the upper lip except as a sign of deep mourning. The clean-shaven face they consider effeminate, and hence in their ignorance they surmised that since there were two white persons they must be man and wife. As the days went by, however, they heard that the white men were teachers of a new religion; that they had come to set forth strange gods; that they worshipped one called Jesus, who was "hanged" (*phāsi diyā*), with two dacoits, as an evil-doer; that He had risen from the grave, coming out of six feet of earth; that He had become invisible (*antardhyān huā*), like some of their own heroic gods who had vanished from the earth. These were a few of the first general impressions which the people formed concerning the new religion. They also learned that one of the white men was to live in their midst, for in a few months he had purchased land, and after a time began to build a mission bungalow. After two or three years this new teacher

who had built the house, having failed in health, was obliged to leave the country, and it was then, early in 1891, that I was called to take up the work so opportunely started by M. D. Adams and George Jackson on their first visit in 1886.

At the time of my arrival there lived in the neighbourhood of Mungeli an old woman, who had the care of her grandchildren, two young lads, who had lost their mother when they were still very small. This *Hindu* grandmamma had a strong dislike to the missionary, whom she always called the "caste-destroyer," and the older of the boys was often cautioned against going near the mission-house, lest the evil eye of enchantment should fall upon him. As the months went by, this lad came into closer contact with the missionary, and he was the first convert it was my privilege to baptize, on the 2nd of August, 1891. Since then he has occupied various positions of trust, and to-day he is First Assistant in the hospital of our Mission at Mungeli. His brother was also strongly disposed to become a Christian, but knowing how this would pain his grandmother, already stricken in years, he stayed by her to the very end, and after her death he also joined the Church.

Period of Evangelization.

From 1891 to 1896 the progress of the new religion was very slow in the region of which I write. This was distinctly a period of evangelization. In many villages the gospel was made known by word of mouth, and also with the help of the steriopticon. On a single night it was not unusual to have lantern exhibitions in two and even three different villages. All the scenes in

the life of Christ thrown on the sheet made a deep impression on the minds of the people, but the picture which carried more force than any other was that of the humble Christ washing the feet of His disciples. Of miracles the *Hindus* had heard to satiety, but the idea of humble service on the part of a teacher was so entirely new to their ways of thinking that it often called forth expressions of surprise and incredulity. Once when this picture was being shown and explained by the preacher, a young *Brāhman*, bursting with pride and self-importance, stood up in the audience and, addressing me, he said, "*Sāhib* (sir), your teaching is upside-down (*ūltā pultā*); you are reversing the order of things. It is wrong, all wrong," and, deeply moved with indignation, he walked out of the audience. Little did he imagine that he was echoing the words uttered many centuries ago, when it was said of the Apostles, "These that have turned the world upside down have come hither also."

The number of converts during the period I have mentioned was very small, and they came out in the face of strong opposition. To the Church of those days it often seemed as though a miracle alone would give us an impetus and help us to extend our borders. One young man, who joined the Church, was greatly opposed at his baptism, for while we were on the way to the river we were met by a large number of his relatives and fellow-castemen, all of whom determined to turn him from his purpose. First they used strong persuasion, and money and women were freely offered; when these failed, they resorted to threats and warnings; he would not survive six months, they said, and our mission-house would be burnt to the ground. His mother, laying hold of her son by the knees, seated her-

self on the ground, and determined not to allow him to move a step towards the river. A *Brāhman* pundit, my personal teacher, who was watching the opposition, advised me to postpone the baptism, for he feared there would be bloodshed if we persisted. For a time I wavered, then in the twinkling of an eye a happy thought was flashed across my mind. "Bring a glass of water quickly," I said to a Christian who was standing near me. In a few minutes the glass was in my hand. Holding this up before the mob, I said to the young man: "If you wish to be a Christian will you drink this after me?" "Yes," he replied. I sipped from the glass and he sipped also. The fetters of caste were broken. The mother released his knees, the relatives and friends stepped back as they cried "He's dead! He's dead!" Without further opposition we walked to the river, and the young man was "buried with Christ in baptism." The relatives had opposed his baptism, knowing that this was the first step towards his complete separation from them, but those few drops of water on his lips had done more to liberate him than if he had been baptized a dozen times; for like the Pharisees of old, there are hundred of thousands in India who still believe that it is that which goes into a man that defiles him and makes him an out-caste.

The Ministry of Healing.

It was in the summer of 1896 that I had the joy of taking to Mungeli one with whose coming there began a new epoch in the history of the cause of Christ in that place. The period of extension and rapid progress in our work dates from the arrival of the missionary doctor, who, with her ministry of healing, has been largely instrumental in removing prejudice

and suspicion, and raising the servants of Christ to a position of respect and esteem in the hearts of the people. The first patient to come under the doctor's treatment, on the day of her arrival, was a young woman troubled with cancer. Her mother was deeply moved by the kindness shown to her daughter, and she very soon became a Christian. Although the patient finally succumbed to her complaint, from that one sick person fully twenty relatives, both near and distant, have ultimately joined the Church. For a while the medical work struggled along under great difficulties Clinics were held in a tent, and then in a dilapidated school building. In time a hospital was erected, and when this proved too small, other buildings were added, until now there is room for about twenty-five in-patients, and the total number of out-patients at the dispensary number over ten thousand during the year. Somehow the rumour spread abroad amongst the villagers that the doctor had a lucky hand, that her touch went a long way in healing their diseases, and so they would often beg of her to feel the pulse, no matter what the malady might be. Patients with itch and ringworm, with boils and ulcers, would hold out their wrists that the pulse might be felt. The *Hindu* doctors or medicine men make it a practice to feel the pulse of a patient for about five minutes, but if the missionary doctor merely touched the wrist of a patient he was satisfied, and went away to follow out her directions. It is understating the facts to say that within a circuit of fifteen miles there is not a single village which has not sent its patients to the doctor, and all who come hear of the gospel of Jesus, and they soon learn that it is the love of Christ which constrains those who wait on them in their pain and suffering.

A Christian Settlement.

Another factor, terrible in itself, which was also the means of extending the interests of the local church, was the memorable famine of 1897. Up to that time the converts had all come from the lower castes. But after the famine we began to have conversions amongst the higher castes also. *Hindus* and Mahomedans who found famine waifs and strays would direct them to the mission-house, and the orphans came to us from various parts of the country, from five, ten, twenty, and even forty miles. Fully five hundred orphans were sent on to various orphanages in different places, and about fifty remained in Mungeli. In order to provide a livelihood for the growing boys, it was decided to purchase a village, and there on the farm, the boys have been settled, so that each has his own "holding," and is responsible for himself and his family. This village, or Christian settlement, has gradually grown in importance and has become a centre of an increasing Christian community, for where there was not a single Christian ten years ago, there are now about eighty church members in four different villages. The *Hindus* in the neighbourhood have begun to believe that the new religion has come to stay, that it has taken root, and that it is no longer in an experimental stage. And this is certainly an encouraging feature, for when such an opinion gains ground, there is much more prospect of an increase in numbers than there would be if the people regarded the new faith as tentative or merely on trial.

The Diseased Out-castes.

One day, about ten years ago, a woman and her two boys stood begging for food near the mission-house at

Mungeli. To the experienced eye it was soon apparent that the woman was a leper, for her face had the swollen look characteristic of the disease, and her hands had lost their fingers. She stood with the remains of her hands resting on the heads of each of her lads, as she asked for food and clothing. For some weeks she was provided with food only, and then a hut was erected to protect her during the approaching rainy season. Her husband, who had deserted her, suddenly appeared, and finding his boys so full of promise, he took them away and left the mother entirely dependent on the missionary. Amongst the lower castes those who are afflicted with this disease live amongst their relatives just as long as possible, and then when the disease is in an advanced stage they are turned adrift. In a short time this one leper was joined by others, and their number steadily increased till I was obliged to seek the aid of the Mission to Lepers. The Society in Edinburgh sent us liberal assistance. A Leper Asylum was built at Mungeli, and after a time another Asylum, for women only, was erected nine miles away. So that the coming of one leper woman, with her two promising boys, has resulted in an institution with two separate portions, accommodating more than eighty lepers, who are now mostly Christians. For this good work we are entirely indebted to the Mission to Lepers. Truly has it been said, that the work for lepers in India is a tract written in large letters, in which the most ignorant can read of the love of Christ to suffering humanity. At one time there were three brothers in our asylum, all of them lepers. On questioning them as to how they contracted the malady, they expressed the opinion that they had taken it from an uncle, who was a leper, and who frequently visited their home.

This particular case brings vividly to the front the prospective feature of this work. The leper asylums are not merely helping the lepers of to-day; they are also saving, by segregation, many possible lepers, and are thus proving a means of stamping out one of the most offensive maladies of humanity.

A Remarkable Conversion.

The gradual development which has characterised other departments is also noticed in connection with the schools of the Mission in Mungeli. There was a time when twenty boys were brought together for instruction with the greatest difficulty. At present there are five different schools, and about four hundred boys and girls are receiving instruction. The head-master of one of the schools, who was formerly a *Hindu*, has now joined the Church, while the story of conversion of another teacher is also full of interest. This young man had long listened to the preaching of the Word in our usual Sunday services. Without my knowledge, one of his Christian friends had fully instructed him in the Way of Life. I first heard his desire to be a Christian one Sunday morning, and he wished to be baptized that same evening. Having a personal dislike to hasty baptisms, for they very often prove disappointing with converts from non-Christian faiths, I tried to persuade this young man to wait till he was further instructed, but his importunity was such that I decided to baptize him after the evening service. His people did all in their power to dissuade him. Their efforts, however, were in vain, for in the presence of a great crowd of witnesses he made a good confession. The next evening his friends, who knew

where they might find him alone, lay in wait for him after nightfall, and carrying him away by force, they placed him under a close guard, lest he should effect an escape. The Christians were greatly disheartened, for they felt that our cause had sustained a defeat. The *Hindus*, on the other hand, were triumphant. "But prayer was made earnestly of the Church unto God for him." He was taken away on a Monday, and the next Friday he succeeded in sending us a message, scribbled in pencil on a scrap of paper. His words were "As the tongue is guarded by thirty-two teeth, so am I guarded." But he hoped to escape, and wished us to arrange for immediate removal to some place of safety. At three o'clock on Saturday morning, like Peter of old, he stood knocking at the door of the house, and when our people opened "they saw him and were amazed." He had slipped away from his sleeping watchmen. Shall we say that it was an angel that smote him on the side and caused him to awake at that early hour when his watchmen were sleeping? Quickly we arranged to send him to a mission-station in Northern India, and there he has remained, having found in Walter Menzies, our missionary, a faithful friend and a conscientious instructor. Twice he has been visited by his father, who has travelled hundreds of miles to prevail on his son to return to his home and his people, but up to the present he has remained faithful to the good confession made before many witnesses.

Very much remains to be said of the Christian community in general, of the difficulties which arise because of the intermingling of Christian and heathen ideas and practices.

When there was an earthquake in India some years ago I heard a remark made by one of the Christians

which may help the reader to understand these difficulties. According to local *Hindu* belief an earthquake is caused when the serpent, or *nāg*, on whose head the earth is supposed to rest, changes its position in order to make the burden rest more comfortably. After the earthquake a Christian said to me: "Jesus Christ must have shifted the weight on His head because He was wearied by the increasing sin on the earth." It would have taken more than a few passing remarks to show this man just where he was wrong in his theory concerning the earthquake. More recently a certain Christian became discontented, and decided to leave the Church and join his former caste-fellows. He prevailed on another young Christian to join him, and they recanted together. Within a month the discontented apostate had died of pneumonia, and the suddenness of his death was such that the companion he had led astray became greatly alarmed, and believed that he was to die also. He implored to be readmitted to the Church, and after a certain period of probation and discipline he was reinstated, and now he is apparently a staunch believer.

In conclusion, perhaps it should be stated that while there is much encouragement in connection with the work of fellow-missionaries in other places, it has been my purpose, as stated in the Preface, to follow the intensive method of inquiry throughout these chapters. The present chapter might more appropriately be entitled "A Chapter of Genesis," for an attempt has been made to describe the beginnings of various forms of missionary effort. Just as the Book of Genesis is full of promise, so also, I am confident, that the beginnings I have endeavoured to describe are full of great possibilities. What we need is more and more of faith and

hope and love; more and more of that abounding optimism so markedly shown as far back as the year 1770, by a servant of God who scanned the future with the eye of faith, and wrote the following hymn :—

"O'er the gloomy hills of darkness
Look, my soul; be still and gaze
All the promises do travail
With a glorious day of grace:
Blessèd jubilee!
Let thy glorious morning dawn.

Let the Indian, let the Negro,
Let the rude barbarian see
That divine and glorious conquest
Once obtained on Calvary:
Let the gospel
Loud resound from pole to pole.

Kingdoms wide, that sit in darkness,
Grant them, Lord, Thy glorious light;
And from eastern coast to western
May the morning chase the night;
And redemption,
Freely purchased, win the day.

May the glorious day approaching,
On their grossest darkness dawn;
And the everlasting gospel
Spread abroad Thy holy name
O'er the borders
Of the great Immanuel's land.

Fly abroad, thou mighty gospel,
Win and conquer, never cease;
May thy lasting, wide dominion
Multiply and still increase:
Sway Thy sceptre,
Saviour, all the world around."

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